

Partners in Education:

Some Policy Guidelines For Improving Relations
Among Different Role Players In The New
Education System With Reference To The
Greater Newcastle Area.

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on problems in the teaching fraternity after 1994. The transition to democracy brought about major changes in the running of the civil service. This study explores how the education policy of the central government in general, and that of KwaZulu-Natal Province in particular, affected human relations between school managers and teachers.

A questionnaire was used to investigate the issue. Education policy guidelines and literature have been used to illustrate how policy can produce unintended consequences. The respondents to the questionnaire were selected school managers and teachers. The questions were aimed at gauging opinion regarding issues such as protection of line managers, moratorium on teacher transfers, the Labour Relations Act, commitment to teaching and training needs, to name just a few. Human relations seemed to worsen from 1996 to 1999 as most educators disobeyed the rules and to some extent continued to do so even after this period, in the name of unionism driven by “relatively” fair labour practice. One of the contentious issues in the conflict was the Labour Relations Act of 1995 that streamlined all labour sectors, thus doing away with differentiated legislation on each sector.

The study found that the following factors contributed to strained human relations in the KwaZulu-Natal education sector: The abolition of corporal punishment in schools, a general lack of recognition for educational achievement of educators, a lack of recognition for good performance by supervisors, the way in which the Labour Relations Act was implemented in schools, unregulated voluntary severance packages for teachers, and the refusal by teacher unions to take up the duty loads of terminated temporary educators.

In the light of the above the study made four recommendations: Knowledge and understanding of the Labour Relations Act should be strengthened among educators, further education of teachers should be recognised as it affects the quality of education in schools, the re-opening of educator transfers should be investigated, and training programmes are important to ensure capacity building.

ABSTRAK

Hierdie studie fokus op probleme wat in die onderwys-sektor ervaar is na 1994. Die transisie na demokrasie het groot veranderinge gebring tot die manier waarop die staatsdiens bestuur is. Die studie ondersoek die manier waarop mense-verhoudinge tussen skoolbestuurders en onderwysers, affekteer is deur die beleid van die sentrale regering in die algemeen, en die provinsie van KwaZulu-Natal in die besonder.

'n Vraelys is gebruik om die ondersoek te doen. Onderwysbeleidsriglyne en literatuur is gebruik om te illustreer hoe beleid in hierdie geval onvoorsiene gevolge gehad het. Die respondente tot die vraelys is geselekteerde skoolbestuurders en onderwysers. Die vrae is gemik daarop om die opinies rakende die volgende kwessies te meet: die beskerming van lynbestuurders, die moratorium op onderwyser verplasings, die Wet op Arbeidverhoudinge, die verbeterings tot onderwys- en opleidingsbehoeftes, ensomeer. Verhoudinge het veral tussen 1996 en 1999 versleg, met die gevolg dat die meerderheid van onderwysers in die provinsie die department se reëls gebreek het (selfs na hierdie periode), in die naam van vakbond-aksie gedryf deur “relatiewe” regverdigde arbeidspraktyk. In hierdie verband, was een van die vernaamste sake in die konflik die Wet op Arbeidsverhoudinge van 1995. Hierdie wet het alle arbeidsektore onder een bedeling gestroomlyn en so weggedoen met gedifferensieerde wetgewing vir elke sektor.

Die studie vind op grond van die vraelys dat die volgende faktore die vernaamstes was in die KwaZulu-Natal onderwys sektor: Die afskaffing van lyfstraf in die skole, die tekort aan erkenning van studie deur onderwysers, die tekort aan erkenning vir goeie prestasie deur toesighouers, die manier waarop die Wet op Arbeidsverhoudinge in skole toegepas is, ongereguleerde toekenning van vrywillege aftrede pakkette, en die weiering deur onderwys vakbonde om die verpligtinge van afgedankte tydelike onderwysers to skouer.

In die lig van hierdie faktore is die volgende voorstelle gemaak: Kennis en verstaan van die Wet op Arbeidsverhoudinge moet beter aan onderwysers gekommunikeer word, verdere studie deur onderwysers moet erken word aangesien dit die kwaliteit van onderwys beïnvloed, onderwys verplasings moet weer ondersoek word, en opleidingsprogramme is 'n belangrike manier van kapasiteitsbou.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study project to all education personnel; both in management and in non-management positions. It is my sincere hope that this project will serve as a reflection of what we wittingly, knowingly and unknowingly do to one another to strengthen and/or weaken human relations as junior and senior personnel.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Partners in education. Some policy guidelines for improving relations among different role players in the new education system with reference to the greater Newcastle Area.

The “partners in education” referred to here are the educators, the school management and to some extent, the whole Department of Education. The latter is represented by the District and Circuit Managers, namely the Superintendents of Education. These partners constantly interact with one another in the execution of their duties. However, the conditions under which they operate sometimes make it impossible for them to work harmoniously.

Because of these strained relations and the consequent damage caused to the education of learners, the present study was undertaken in order to understand and deal with the underlying problems. These problems had to be elicited by means of research, since people had always read many things into and out of these problems, which were not based on conclusive research. Reliable information is needed if the problem is to be adequately addressed and if effective and practical policy guidelines are to be formulated.

An explorative study with a specific interest in the state of human relations was considered, by the researcher, to be one of the possible solutions to these problems. If the research findings and conclusions are studied, the conflict ensuing at school level could be resolved to some extent.

This was the whole motivating force behind undertaking this research study. The purpose of the study was, therefore, to find out whether the alleged problems with morale and human relations are supported by empirical research.

The study also has a clear applied interest in that it looks into how problems could, if they indeed exist, be addressed effectively. Interviews and questionnaires were used to find out the underlying causes of negative feelings from the educators and school managers. The responses were correlated to the recent literature findings so that the

study is not seen in isolation from what the authorities on the labour, education and conflict issues say. I believe that in this way, the study will provide a meaningful contribution to the information base needed to face the ever-changing circumstances.

Literature has indicated succinctly that employers have to take care of employees' needs even if some of them are not work-related. Ignoring the employment, as well as personal or outside needs, has severe long-term effects for employers. Available literature has also stated that employers and employees must not bottle up feelings. They must communicate whatever worries them in an employment relationship to avoid a trigger of emotional release that could be out of proportion. Many problems emanate out of this behaviour and lack of communication.

Authors on education and conflict have stressed the importance of participatory leadership on the part of managers in order to inculcate a results-oriented style of leadership. This leadership style can also be equated to the proactive approach. It calls for a visionary style of leadership. If this style of leadership is adopted, problems and conflicts will be reduced by the day.

Previous studies have also revealed that workers' unmet expectations are the cause of disillusionment for employees and this disillusionment leads to withdrawal behaviour that impacts on productivity and efficiency. Training has become an important component in maintaining a competent workforce. Erasmus & Van Dyk (1996 : 2) assert that "[t]raining is usually presented when current work standards are not being maintained, and when this situation can be ascribed to a lack of knowledge and or skills and attitudes among individual employees or groups in an enterprise."

The aim of the study was to arrive at policy guidelines to improve the relations in education, which are so strained amongst stakeholders in the greater Newcastle area. In the light of this problem a survey on human and labour relations was conducted on educators and school managers in the area.

Chapter 2 deals briefly with the problem to be investigated and the background of the problems in KwaZulu Natal Education. It goes on to explain what the available literature says about human relations and how they have become strained. It also

highlights and explains the hypotheses that formed the core of the survey. There were fifteen hypotheses that were tested in the questionnaire.

Chapter 3 deals with the methodology used in the study and the reasons why those methods were used. The methods used were unstructured interviews, study of notices and circulars, a questionnaire and a literature study. The hypotheses and the sampling strategy are also explained in this chapter.

Chapter 4 deals with the presentation of findings. Graphs and tables have been included in order to explain the data scientifically. Chapter 5 deals with the discussion of the findings in terms of the statistics and what could be inferred from these statistics.

Chapter 6 deals with proposed policy guidelines that are aimed at resolving the conflict and improving the relations in order to improve the quality of education in the province.

Chapter 7 deals with the conclusion arrived at by the researcher in terms of what appears in recent literature and the actual findings as discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROBLEM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the nature of the problem to be investigated and the way the study was carried out. The main focus of the research was to try and formulate policy guidelines for improving human relations among the educators, school management and the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department. It must be noted that the department in this case refers exclusively to its operations in the greater Newcastle Area. For the purpose of this research, the greater Newcastle Area involves two education districts namely the Dannhauser and Newcastle Districts.

The purpose this study was to determine whether understanding or commonality of purpose exists among educators, the school management and the department in the two previously outlined districts. Human relations have become very sour between the department and educators. Therefore, some kind of survey had to be conducted to determine whether the strained relationship has any negative effect on the quality of education provided to learners. The survey had to assess whether the morale of educators has lowered and how this impacts on their performance at school.

The term “educators” refers to the teachers who teach the departmentally defined curriculum and who, in turn, receive compensation for such activity.

School management can be defined as those who are in charge of educators at school level and who see to it that the school fulfils its purpose (that of teaching) and that the Department of Education is represented at a local level.

Rossi and Freeman (1986:30) attest that the “steady growth in the number, variety, complexity, and social importance of policy issues confronting government is making increasing intellectual demands on public officials and their staffs.” Finding the actual factors contributing to the problem under investigation would make it possible to propose some guidelines on how policy should address the situation.

The Department of Education has become a site of conflict as a result of circumstances. Sometimes conflict arises out of the department's own actions and sometimes due to the activities of the teachers, unions, and more so, as a result of the new policy framework within which the department operates. Important contributing factors are a lack of vision, resistance to change by educators, over-democratisation, compensation for the past, and political expediency. Some of these causal factors, for example over-democratisation, redress of the past and political expediency, have not previously been on the departmental agenda. Now, in the new dispensation, the department has to address these issues. "They are priority issues now, and new ones of a similar character emerge virtually every year. For most elected and appointed officials and their staffs, such complicated and controversial questions are outside the scope of their judgement and previous experience. Yet, the question cannot be sidestepped; government executives are expected to deal with them responsibly and effectively." (Rossi & Freeman, 1986:30).

There is fierce competition among the role players for resources, information and power. At the same time, these role_players are not mere role players, but they are (or should be) partners in education. Each partner cannot exist and function without the other.

The education department has a mandate to provide literacy and advanced education to the young population. This mandate cannot be carried out without school management, which must filter down to the school level. Also, school management is made up of just about four or five individuals in a school with fairly adequate resources, so the non-management educators should actually teach the learners.

Under these circumstances, constructive human relations are of the utmost importance to implement the new policy successfully. A cooperative social situation and a common understanding are essential. "A cooperative social situation is one where the goals of the various individuals are so interlinked that the goals of an individual can only be achieved if the goals of other group members are achieved as well" (Kemp 1998:6). It is exactly this kind of situation that is missing in the education environment in the schools that were examined. It is a wonder that learners even achieve what they achieve at the end of each academic year.

The fierce competition that actually exists on the ground has very destructive consequences.

“A competitive social situation is described as one in which the goals of the various participants are so interlinked that if one individual’s goals are achieved the goals of others will be thwarted and not achieved. What is a win outcome for one is a lose outcome for the others. In the individualistic approach the individual seeks to achieve personal goals ignoring the goal achievement efforts of others (Kemp 1998:6)”.

2.2 HUMAN RELATIONS

Human relations are an integral part of all work environments where there are two or more persons involved. Pieter Koortzen (1997) defines human relations as “verbal and nonverbal interaction with another human being.” This process, therefore, involves every activity, even doing nothing or a refusal to perform by the people involved in a work relationship. Carvell (1970:1) defines human relations as “the integration of people into a work situation that motivates them to work together productively, cooperatively, and with economic, psychological and social satisfaction.”

Since constructive human relations are such an important element in any work situation, [as attested by many authorities in the subject, for example Reece & Brandt (1996:5), Carvel (1970:5) and Kirchmeyer (1995:57)], more research should be done on this phenomenon. Policy makers will be provided with a firm basis on which to formulate policy guidelines. In promoting constructive human relations it is important to create a healthy work environment and to cater for other psychological, emotional and personal needs of employees. An employee is a totality. He/she has other needs as well. Working conditions cannot be isolated from physical or personal conditions. However, in most cases “employers act as if workers’ non-work worlds do not exist. Such employers are concerned mainly with workers’ fulfilling their work responsibilities, and view workers’ non-work (stick with spelling in original) lives as solely the concern of workers themselves” (Kirchmeyer, 1995:57).

It is clear that in many cases the National Department of Education, from which provincial departments derive their policies, acted with political expediency. It had to

deal with the demand for redressing the past and was often unable to distinguish effective staff from non-effective staff.

Mass rhetoric is a bad foundation for sound government. What is needed instead is visionary leadership. Most of the populist concepts like “redress”, “democracy”, “change”, turn out to be clichés when it comes to action on the ground. These metaphors are translated into policy in such a way that policy makers find themselves disempowered by the masses. Sound concepts are turned on their heads or made non-implementable by bad policy. An attempt to redress the past must not render the policy maker unaccountable. One cannot always cite the past as the cause for making a failure of the present situation, therefore failure must be owned up to. The new policy makers must be accountable for the way they make and implement policy. “The fact that people are accountable for their decisions is an implicit or explicit constraint upon all consequential acts they undertake” (Bacharach, 1995:469).

Despite noble intentions, provincial and national departments often caused more problems than what they solved. In their zeal to correct the legacy of the past, they created a dilemma themselves. Time frames were unrealistic. Policy makers should, therefore, take responsibility for the present situation in order to reduce post decision anxiety. Decision-makers must be able to explain their decisions as justified and legitimate. “Decisions must be justified not only to those whom the decision maker is directly accountable to, but also to others (e.g. peers, self, subordinates, and other constituents)” (Bacharach, 1995:469). The study confirms overwhelmingly that a variety of issues are perceived by respondents to contribute to the bad state of human relations. “If schools are to maintain a focus on the future, school leaders must develop policies, practices, and programs that keep them in touch with the people whose support they need.” (Schlechty, 1997:108).

Consultation and communication yield results in an organisation in such a way that everyone involved will assume ownership of the organisation for the realisation of its goals. “Given a results oriented style of leadership, it is essential that educators and school leaders learn the art and science of participatory leadership (leadership that assumes the commitment of followers) rather than a command and control style of leadership...” (Schlechty, 1997:113).

Pearson (1995:407) has the following to say about employee expectations. “[T]he extent of job satisfaction reflects the cumulative level of net worker expectations. A key proposition of the paradigm was that employees expect their job to provide a mix of features (e.g. pay, promotion, autonomy) for which the job holder has certain preferential values.” Also worth noting is the rating of an issue on its lack of recognition for educational achievement. The Department has abolished the categories wherein the educators could enter after each qualification, only promotion can change the educator’s category.

Recognition of educational achievement should be an integral part of conditions of service to promote life-long learning. This trend causes disillusionment to quite a number of educators who believe that getting a qualification enhances ones outlook on teaching and education. “Specifically, some behavioural scientists have assessed the effect of unmet expectations in the workplace as a force for determining withdrawal behaviour” (Pearson, 1995: 406). The quality or standard of teaching may drop tremendously. He further states that employees “have a wide range of expectations in their job situation ... (and) that when these anticipations are inadequately fulfilled job satisfaction will decline, and turnover is a likely consequence” (1995:406).

Every employee wants to know when he or she has achieved in order to reinforce good actions. Carvell (1970:296) asserts that it is “usually advantageous to communicate with employees when the topic is already important to them.” Surely every employee knows when they have done their best and they expect others, especially supervisors, to recognise this. The importance of giving this information to an employee cannot be overemphasised.

Supervisors (school management) have an important role to play in the motivation of educators in this new dispensation where everything has been reshaped, sometimes for the worse. A supervisor or school manager commands authority and respect. His word has an impact on the subordinate. “Most of what is communicated by a supervisor goes beyond what he says. Other supervisors who may not necessarily be as articulate and who may violate rules of good leadership may still gain the respect of their subordinates and be able to influence them so that they obtain high levels of production” (Carvell, 1970:30). 66 out of 200 respondents rated lack of praise by the

supervisor between 1 and 5 as a cause of strained human relations in education. The figure represents 33% of educators in the greater Newcastle.

It is also suggested that the Labour Relations Act (LRA) and its application to schools is also a major source of conflict. South Africa in general has seen a considerable number of strikes between 1990 – 1997 and educators have been part of this action. This trend has a very negative impact on our economy. This illustrates clearly and outright that a study such as this is very important. A lot has to be done in labour relations to normalise our society. One may also infer that democracy is still in the phase of infancy and the province will have to learn from its mistakes for quite a long time.

I fully concur with Bekker (1996:18) when he asserts that “South Africa’s new democracy is still mostly theoretical and academic, the rules of which spelled out as they are in legal and procedural documents are typically without precedent or practical example.”

All these factors indicate that there are massive problems in education in the greater Newcastle and this may be a reflection of the state of affairs in the whole province of KwaZulu-Natal. Education can be said to be at a crisis point. Habermas (1976) in Hewton (1986:72) “[suggest] that crises arise when the structure of a social system allows fewer possibilities for problem solving than are necessary for the continued existence of the system...”. Hewton (1986:72) also asserts that a “crisis, therefore, exist[s] if enough people can [be] persuaded that it exists.’ Respondents have communicated (via their answers to the survey) that there are massive problems. Herman (1973) in Hewton (1986:72) further mentions an important point with which I fully concur. He suggests that there are three elements of a crisis and he lists them as: “threat involving a potential hindrance to an important organisational state or goal, short decision time, and an element of surprise.” Therefore, these factors are indeed a threat to the realisation of the culture of teaching and learning service (COLTS).

Indeed, the department does not have a contingency plan, it decides as crises arise and, usually, inappropriately. Also, there is an element of surprise because every stakeholder (educators, school management and the department) does not know what to do in a crisis and stakeholders do not understand each other’s intentions.

2.3 LINE MANAGERS ARE NOT PROTECTED ADEQUATELY BY THE DEPARTMENT

The KwaZulu-Natal Education Department terminated temporary educators because, for financial reasons, it could not afford to pay them. It also stated that most schools are overstaffed, especially in urban and peri-urban areas (townships). It decided to provide secondments of staff to schools where there were shortages. The unions rejected and refused this idea. This was between March 1998 and about October 1998.

It, therefore, instructed schools to reorganise timetables to suit this new situation, which was also refused by the unions. The Superintendent-General reacted through his HRM Circular 19/98 and stated: "The Department cannot, however, enforce secondments as secondments must, in terms of legislation, be undertaken with the concurrence of the educator concerned. The resistance to HRM 1 of 1998 thus prevented the Department's efforts to spread its human resources in order to achieve equity of personnel."

The Department further instructed principals and their management staff to vigorously make educators take up the duty loads of terminated temporary educators. I must point out here that principals and their management staff were unhappy about cuts of staff as this challenged their contingency abilities. Moreover, principals and their management staff are part of the teaching fraternity; job insecurity is a real concern of theirs too.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD OF RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will discuss the methodological aspects of the study, including the following: the research question, the hypotheses, the strategy for sample taking, sample size, representation, dependent variables, measuring instruments and statistical techniques.

3.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

From the discussion in Chapter 1, it is clear that this is an explorative study with a specific applied interest. The state of human relations in the new system of school administration has not been researched in any substantial way and data is almost non-existent. The first purpose of the study is, therefore, to find out whether our impression that morale is low among educators and that human relations are strained, is supported by empirical research. But the study also has a clear applied interest. How can these problems (if they do indeed exist) be addressed effectively? Therefore, the further research question is, “what policy guidelines can be devised to improve relationships in the schooling system and thereby improve the quality of education?”

The focus of the study is the greater Newcastle Area. This covers two education districts named earlier as the Dannhauser and Newcastle Districts. Districts are usually made up of about four circuits. Each district is managed by the Chief Superintendent of Education, hereafter to be referred to as district manager.

The Superintendent of Education, who also manages each circuit, will be referred to as the circuit manager from now on. The research problem is informed by a number of hypotheses, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.3 HYPOTHESES

Van der Merwe (1996) in Garbers (ed.) (1996:281-2) defines a hypothesis as “a statement that postulates an assumed relationship between two or more phenomena or variables.” In this study, a number of hypotheses were tested. The basis for these was the statements made by educators on the situation in general and on possible causes for the bad state of affairs. The relevant hypotheses were the following:

3.3.1 UNREGULATED VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE PACKAGES THAT ALLOWED YOUNG AND WELL QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO LEAVE THE SCHOOLING SYSTEM HAD A VERY NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN KWAZULU NATAL

The Department of Public Service and Administration developed the system of voluntary severance packages, since it administers all public service personnel. The Department of Finance, as the paymaster, also had a major input in developing the idea due to the ever-increasing salary bill it has to contend with. The Department of Education, through its provincial structures, had to carry out the implementation of these packages for educators. Resolution 3 of 1996 of the Education Labour Relations Council paragraph 1.1 states explicitly:

“The public service should be right-sized in accordance with government policy and the available resources through collective agreements”.

Paragraph 1.9 (a) (1) of the same resolution further states: **“Any educator may volunteer for a severance package, as set out in Annexure A, in order to allow educators who prefer to leave the service, to do so and to create room for the absorption of educators who are in excess.”**

It is clear from this directive that economic considerations (to the exclusion of other important factors) were the driving force behind the system. The department allowed anybody who wished to take a voluntary severance package to do so in order to achieve the national aim that the “public service should be right-sized...” (Resolution 3/1996 of ELRC, paragraph 1). Other factors like expertise, age, experience and qualifications were not seriously taken into consideration. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

3.3.2 THE LABELLING OF QUALIFIED EDUCATORS AS TEMPORARY **LOWERED THE MORALE AMONG EDUCATORS**

A temporary educator is an educator who either occupies a substantive or temporary post but whose contract ends after a specified period, which is always shorter than or equal to one year. In the previous dispensation, a temporary educator would be an unqualified educator who either relieves or substitutes for another educator who is on study or accouchement leave.

This practice developed because it was not always possible to find a qualified substitute on short notice and because it was feared that effective teaching and learning would be otherwise disrupted. But for a qualified educator to be regarded as “temporary” for up to four years was unheard of in the education system.

3.3.3 REFUSAL BY TEACHER UNIONS TO TAKE UP DUTY LOADS OF TERMINATED TEMPORARY EDUCATORS, ILLUSTRATES THE DISRUPTIVE EFFECT OF THE LRA

At the time of conducting the survey there was still a stalemate on the department’s instruction that these duty loads should be taken by the remaining personnel. The unions did not want to budge and based their case directly on the LRA (Labour Relations Act.).

Although this impasse has been theoretically resolved it remains to be seen whether the proposed resolution will be implemented at grassroots level between educator representatives (unions) and the department. The latter is often regarded as a “sell-out” by people on the grassroots level.

The main purpose of the hypothesis is to assess what measure of control the department, as an employer, has over its employees in a situation where employees make use of the LRA. This stipulates that an employee has the right not to execute an unfair and unreasonable instruction. This is clearly an untenable situation. On one side the department has a complete jurisdiction over its employees. However, on the other the employees enjoy considerable protection, especially when this is as a result of a policy that superficially talks about figures (number of remunerable personnel)

and in practice targets human beings (persons that have to be retrenched in terms of the budget).

3.3.4 THE MORATORIUM ON TRANSFERS AND THE SECONDMENTS DETERMINED BY EXCESS POSTS UNDERMINED TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

In 1996 the department had declared a moratorium on the transfer of educators. This is still the situation. Frustrated educators, as was very clear from their reactions, remain at schools from which they would like to be transferred. The survey wanted to ascertain the effect this policy had on the educators' sense of professionalism – a policy that was supposed to address equity, but which clearly failed to achieve this. The department gave an alternative to transfers in the form of secondment whereby the educator remains employed at the original school but works at another one. This means that a seconded educator could be called back at any time.

His or her future would always be uncertain. A professional should, in fact, enjoy the freedom to follow preferred career opportunities wherever they occur.

3.3.5 THE LINE MANAGER IS OFTEN THE TARGET OF INTIMIDATION BY UNIONS

On this aspect the questionnaire wanted to establish to what extent managers see themselves as targets of union members' action. The aim was to ascertain the actual feelings and experiences of school managers with regard to how the whole process of change is affecting them on the ground. The aim was also to assess the experience of educators who are union members at the same time and who are affected by the same process. An awareness of how they reconcile the role of union membership with that of educators needs to be established.

This line of enquiry was prompted by some strange remarks by some respondents when a small trial run of the questionnaire was conducted to test the functionality of the various questions. I must note, however, that unexpected responses were also received to a question on whether pupils who cannot afford to pay school fees should or should not be admitted to school, as well as a question on the funding of education.

What also necessitated this question was that, too often, the educators directed their anger about departmental policies to resident managers, understandably because they represent the department at the school level, and also because they execute policies as stipulated by the relevant laws. The managers often find themselves in a dilemma, because they may not necessarily agree with government policies but they have an obligation to execute these policies. What makes matters worse is that the managers are themselves also members of the unions. They then appear to the general membership as agents with a double agenda. Their credibility is, therefore, severely damaged in the process. Educators would, like unionists, prefer acting as a united front rather than reveal the divisibility of their role as managers on the one hand, and unionists on the other.

3.4 SAMPLE TAKING

High schools were selected for the purpose of the study because they are actual institutions where most problems manifest themselves in the education system. Subject specialisation takes place in high schools. The impact of a lack of equipment and facilities is mostly felt in high schools. It is where the pass and failure rate is scrutinised.

The high school is where payment and non-payment of fees has an impact. It is where fees are considerably higher than in the elementary phase. Charging lower fees for fear of community resistance can cause irreparable harm to the position of the school manager and to the department. This is especially critical when parents are requested to pay additional contributions at mid-year as funds become exhausted. There are examples of such cases in some schools. The secondary school is an environment where working conditions for educators become a site of struggle between hostile unions. Educators are under pressure due to constantly increasing workloads and have to contend with syllabus deadlines imposed by the system.

The high school is also an environment where the managers are often unable to function effectively because of violence and intimidation by students, the community, and by unions. This might not always take the form of physical assault. However, in most cases, these factors do make it unbearable for managers to continue working at a particular school.

Educator specialisation is the prescribed and accepted norm at secondary school level, unlike at the elementary phase (where an educator can teach all subjects alone over shorter periods if there are shortages). At high school level the curriculum and its timetable structure cannot be reduced just because there are staff shortages. The morale of well-intentioned educators and managers comes under severe pressure because they have to constantly devise makeshift arrangements whenever a crisis arises. At the elementary phase the impact is not the same. Where educators have to share a grade and classroom for their areas of specialisation, learners can easily notice bad blood amongst educators and are negatively affected by the situation.

Lastly, the high school is an exit point before tertiary education is undertaken. It is where the potential adult has to be adequately prepared to enter the real world. All this means that a high school should be an environment that is free from bad human relations and derogating working conditions. The decision to focus on the high school for sample taking was based on these compelling reasons.

3.5 SAMPLE COMPOSITION

3.5.1 TARGET POPULATION

The target population included both school managers and educators. (People from both of these categories belonged to a variety of unions).

3.5.2 SAMPLE SIZE

The districts of Dannhauser and Newcastle consist of 59 secondary schools. 420 questionnaires were distributed to 25 of these schools. 200 completed questionnaires were returned. These were divided as follows:

3.5.2.1 SCHOOL MANAGERS

60 managers returned the questionnaire. This includes principals, deputy principals and heads of departments. Some of these were circuit managers. Although the latter are not necessarily school managers, they do affect and are affected by what takes

place in the schools under their jurisdiction. Consequently, they were included in the sample.

3.5.2.2 EDUCATORS

140 educators returned the questionnaire. For the purposes of this study, an educator is defined as a high school educator who does not form part of the management structure.

3.5.2.3 UNIONS

All unions found in the two districts were represented in the sample. These were South African Democratic Teacher's Union (SADTU), National Professional Teacher's Union (NAPTU-NAPTOSA), Association of Professional Educators of KwaZulu-Natal (APEK), Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysunie (SAOU), South African Union of Vocational and Specialized Education (SAUVSE) and 13 non-affiliates from both management and non-management staff.

3.6 REPRESENTATION

In order to ensure that the sample is as representative as possible, the following aspects were included in the questionnaire (cf Wolmarans & Eksteen, 1989:21).

- a) Age
- b) Gender
- c) Highest standard passed
- d) Highest academic qualification
- e) Highest professional qualification
- f) Position / rank
- g) Teaching experience
- h) Union membership

The following figures and tables represent the actual statistics of the target population.

3.6.1 GENDER

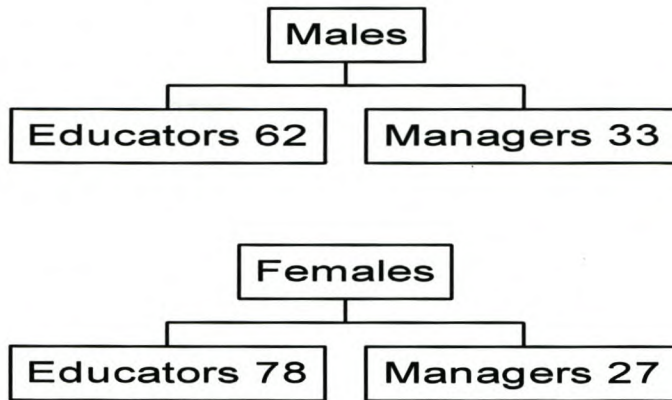


Table 3.6.1.1

3.6.2 AGE

AGE	SAUVSE		SADTU		NAPTU		APEK		SAOU		NON-AFFIL	
	ED	MAN	ED	MAN	ED	MAN	ED	MAN	ED	MAN	ED	MAN
22-26 Yrs	-	-	05	-	04	-	04	-	04	-	04	-
27-31 Yrs	-	-	11	02	04	-	05	03	08	01	05	-
32-36 Yrs	-	-	18	04	04	08	05	-	04	-	02	-
37-41 Yrs	-	-	10	01	06	04	04	03	09	05	-	01
42-46 Yrs	-	01	04	02	04	06	01	-	03	06	01	01
47-50 Yrs	-	-	-	-	-	06	-	-	-	03	01	01
51-54 Yrs	-	-	03	-	-	-	01	-	03	02	-	-
55-60 Yrs	-	-	-	-	02	-	01	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	01	51	09	24	24	21	06	31	17	13	03

Table 3.6.1.2

NB: ED = Educators, MAN = Management

Matriculated

200 respondents

3.6.4 HIGHEST PROFESSIONAL / ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

QUALIFICATION	EDUCATORS	MANAGEMENT
a) Masters Degree	01	03

b) Honours' Degree	08	13
c) Bachelor's Degree	40	38
d) Bachelor's Degree +1 Diploma	22	34
e) Bachelor's Degree +2 Diplomas	03	19
f) 2 Teaching Diplomas	03	02
g) Teaching Diploma only	65	04
Total	142	113

3.6.5 TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF RESPONDENTS

<u>YEARS EXPERIENCE</u>	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	
	EDUCATORS	MANAGEMENT
a) 00 – 02 years	05	-
b) 03 – 05 years	39	01
c) 06 – 09 years	36	06
d) 10 – 15 years	37	19
e) 16 – 20 years	13	17
f) 21 – 25 years	08	14
g) 26 – 30 years	-	03
h) 31 – 35 years	02	-

3.6.6 UNION REPRESENTATION

UNION	OVERALL SAMPLE		MALES		FEMALES	
	EDUCAT ORS	MANAGEM ENT	EDUCAT ORS	MANAGEM ENT	EDUCAT ORS	MANAGEM ENT
SADTU	51	09	27	07	24	02
NAPTU	24	24	14	15	10	09
APEK	21	06	06	-	15	06
SADTU	31	17	09	11	22	06
SAUVSE	-	01	-	-	-	01
Non Affiliates	13	03	06	-	07	03
TOTAL	140	60	62	33	78	27

3.7 VARIABLES

There are a number of variables that I believe influenced and still influence the present state of the KwaZulu-Natal education system. These include both dependent and independent variables.

3.7.1 INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Mouton, 1996:94 defines an independent variable as a causal variable since it “is the presumed cause of the dependent variable, which (the latter) is the presumed effect.” Hereunder follow a list of such causal variables.

3.7.1.1 HUMAN RELATIONS

“The term human relations in its broadest sense covers all types of interactions among people – their conflicts, cooperative efforts and group relationships” (Reece & Brandt, 1996:5). The survey focused on two of the critical aspects of those interactions, namely the interaction on a personal level, and the interaction in the formal employment situation. Relationships in the employment setup are determined by the interaction on a personal level in both a positive and a negative sense. If this relationship is negative, it will affect the whole field of labour relations in a detrimental way (Reece & Brandt: 1996, 5). They reiterate their statement by saying

that the “study of human relations emphasizes the analysis of human behaviour, prevention strategies and resolution of behavioural problems.”

3.7.1.2 UNIONISATION

Unionisation can be defined as the process by which the employee becomes aware of his or her rights and obligations to the employer. Unfortunately, the issue of obligation is almost always overlooked. Employees become unionised inter alia because they believe their rights and privileges might be infringed upon at some stage of the process. The union itself can take an active part in persuading employees to join it to promote its cause or to carry out its agenda.

The mere fact that the employees are unionised causes the employer to strategize on how to circumvent their interests. This leads to counteractions by the unionised fraternity and a vicious cycle ensues. Each party holds the other to ransom. Employees can withhold their labour and the employer can apply the “no work no pay principle”. Unionisation is thus an independent variable, which directly affects the attitudes and actions of the employer.

Unionisation can also be considered to be a qualitative variable because it can be subdivided into further categories. For instance, the issue of unionisation includes the following aspects, which can be very decisive depending on the extent to which the employees are unionised.

3.7.1.2.1 TRANSPARENCY

Process of conducting the organisation’s activity without a perceived hidden agenda.

3.7.1.2.2 AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Process of recognising the effect of job reservation and bias in the work place against people of colour and taking steps to rectify this.

3.7.1.2.3 IMPARTIALITY IN HANDLING PERSONNEL

Fair and equal treatment of personnel.

3.7.1.2.4 NON-INTEREST IN EMPLOYEE WELFARE

Failure to improve the working conditions.

3.7.1.2.5 STAFF/CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Improvement of employee potential, for present and future challenges.

3.7.1.3 TRAINING

Training is another independent variable in this study. Erasmus & Van Dyk (1996:2) define training “as a systematic and planned process to change the knowledge, skill and behaviour of employees in such a way that organisational objectives are achieved.”

They go on to say: “Training is usually presented when current work standards are not being maintained, and when this situation can be ascribed to a lack of knowledge and or skills and attitudes among individual employees or groups in an enterprise”. Training was, therefore, one of the decisive variables in this study that was put to test in order to prove or disprove the hypotheses on introducing programmes in education. Training envisaged in this study can take place both at pre-employment and post-employment phases. For example it can be a pre-service and/or in-service condition for the organisation’s prospective and actual employees.

3.7.1.4 FUNDING

Funding is the activity of injecting financial resources to a specific project or a number of projects with a view to realise that or those projects. Van Dyk et al (1997:116) assert that there “is [a] direct relationship between the economic environment and skills development. Quite often this relationship is overlooked in planning and policy development.” The implication is, then, that if the KZN Department of Education wants to ensure that its personnel is worth its budget, (salaries make up around 90% of this budget), it should make funds available for skills development and training.

Funding in education covers a wide spectrum of other factors like equipment and facilities, commitment to teaching, training, salaries, student admission, flow of

information, school governance and curriculum design and change. Most of these factors were hypothesised in the survey questionnaire.

3.7.2 DEPENDENT VARIABLES

A dependent variable is a variable that is an effect of another (independent) variable. For the purpose of this study a few such variables were measured and they are explained in the following paragraphs.

3.7.2.1 THE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT (LRA)

The LRA was promulgated in 1995 but came into operation in 1996. I define the LRA as a dependent variable. The new LRA was created as a reaction to the injustices of the past in so far as employer-employee relations were concerned. In the past, each sector of public life used to have its own labour relations mechanism. The new LRA is an inclusive measure covering all sectors of the South African work force.

The LRA makes provision for collective agreements signed between employers and unions. It clearly states that “collective agreement binds the parties to it, as well as each party to the collective agreement and the members of every other party to it in so far as the provisions are applicable to them” (Nel (ed.), 1998:93). These collective agreements make the LRA a dependent variable because on many occasions one of the parties to such an agreement reneges, thus making an agreement meaningless. In practice, the implementation of these collective agreements depends on the sincerity and good faith of the parties involved.

Since the sector-specific laws have been repealed in favour of one inclusive Act (the LRA), the Department of Education is dependent on guidance provided by and decisions made by the Department of Labour. To illustrate the extent of this dependence on the Department of Labour by the Department of Education and other departments, see Schedule 6 of the LRA for the laws repealed by Section 212 of the same Act as appended hereunder.

LAWS REPEALED BY SECTION 212

NO. AND YEAR OF LAW	SHORT TITLE	EXTENT OF REPEAL
<u>Act No. 28 of 1956</u>	Labour Relations Act, 1956	The whole
Act No. 41 of 1959	Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, 1959	The whole
Act No. 18 of 1961	Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, 1961	The whole
Act No. 43 of 1966	Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, 1966	The whole
Act No. 61 of 1966	Industrial Conciliation Further Amendment Act, 1966	The whole
Act No. 104 of 1967	Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, 1967	The whole
Act No. 21 of 1970	Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, 1970	The whole
Act No. 94 of 1979	Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, 1979	The whole
Act No. 95 of 1980	Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act, 1980	The whole
Act No. 57 of 1981	Labour Relations Amendment Act, 1981	The whole
Act No. 51 of 1982	Labour Relations Amendment Act, 1982	The whole
Act No. 2 of 1983	Labour Relations Amendment Act, 1983	The whole
Act No. 81 of 1984	Labour Relations Amendment Act, 1984	The whole
Act No. 83 of 1988	Labour Relations Amendment Act, 1988	The whole
Act No. 9 of 1991	Labour Relations Amendment Act, 1991	The whole
Act No. 129 of 1993	General Law Third Amendment Act, 1993	Section 9 only
Act No. 146 of 1993	Education Labour Relation Act, 1993	The whole
Act No. 147 of 1993	Agricultural Labour Act, 1993	Chapter 1 only
Act No. 50 of 1994	Agricultural Labour Amendment Act, 1994	Section 1 only
Proclamation No. 105 of 1994	Public Service Labour Relations Act, 1994	The whole
Proclamation No. 128 of 1994	Education Labour Relations Act, Amendment Proclamation 1994	The whole except Section 6
Proclamation No 134 of 1994	-	Section 1 and 2 only
-	South African Police Service Labour Relations Regulations, 1995	The whole

3.7.2.2 THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS ACT (SASA) OF 1996

This Act (Act 84 of 1996) determines the role and rights of each of the stakeholders. The stakeholders are the parents (governing bodies), educators and learners. The actual success of this Act is dependent upon each of the stakeholders fulfilling their role faithfully and diligently.

The Schools Act gave powers to stakeholders with one hand and took them away with the other. The educators saw their authority diminished in favour of governing bodies. The educators are now, it seems, solely concerned with the academic component of school. Guiding a child as a total person with educational and other needs (moral and spiritual) (avoid using etc) seems to be a dimension of education taken away from the educators.

Section 10(1) of the Schools Act says that “[n]o person may administer corporal punishment at a school to a learner.” Any person who contravenes subsection (1) is guilty of an offence of assault and is liable on conviction to a sentence. Learners depend heavily on these provisions for their behaviour, which render educators powerless to punish an unruly learner. Working conditions are frustrating, yet the end-of-year results are expected to be good.

3.7.2.3 COMMITMENT TO TEACHING

Commitment to teaching depends upon a number of factors. For the success of any organisation, it is imperative that personnel are committed to their work because they receive remuneration in return. The employer and employees will always be engaged in a vicious cycle if the former pays for service, which is not forthcoming from the side of the employees. The employment contract is the agreement that makes it an obligation for the parties to function and relate in good faith and in accordance with the agreement signed.

Nel (1998:70) spells out the requirements for a valid employment contract as follows:

- **the parties must have contractual capacity**
- **performance of the contract must be possible (i.e. if a person professes to be a welder he should be able to do welding according to a certain standard)**

- **the contract may not be contra bones mores (against the public moral values)**
- **the contract must comply with any formalities which may be prescribed e.g. all apprenticeship contracts must be in writing)**
- **the parties must intend to be bound.**

The basic tenet of an employment contract for an educator is, as in other fields, that performance of a contract must be possible. Apart from the necessary infrastructure, it must be recognised that commitment to teaching is not dependent exclusively on fair salaries. The employer should be seen to strive to cater for the psychological and physical needs of its employees.

Swanepoel (1998:17) refers to a psychological contract. He describes this contract as a reciprocal commitment between the employer and employee.

He asserts that employees “enter the organisation with certain tacit expectations regarding the employment relationship. Employees expect to receive something in addition to the formal contractually agreed upon salary, benefits and other conditions of employment. Employees returns to the organisation, in terms of aspects such as work behaviour, performance, commitment, cooperation, loyalty, productivity and so forth, may largely be the result of how they experience or perceive the fulfillment of their psychological contracts with the organisation.”

3.7.3 MEASURING INSTRUMENT

A measuring instrument, in research terms, is a tool that is used to elicit information and provoke a particular response from the respondent. The decisive factor for a measuring instrument is reliability. Thus, “reliability refers to the fact that different research participants being tested by the same instrument at different times should respond identically to the instrument” (Mouton, 1996:144).

Another important dimension of a measuring instrument is validity. “A measure is valid to the extent that it measures what it is intended to measure. While the concept of validity is easy to comprehend, it is difficult to test whether a particular instrument is valid, because for many, if not most, social and behavioural variables, no agreed-

upon testing standards exist” (Rossi & Freeman, 1986:200). Nonetheless, the measuring instruments are described in detail below.

3.7.3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was the main measuring instrument in this study. It comprised of a number of questions aimed at eliciting appropriate responses that will prove or disprove the researcher’s and public’s general opinion. The researcher designed the questions in such a way that not only general opinions could be reinforced, but also specific and special opinions which will, in the end, result in a favourable outcome for the public good. “When preparing a questionnaire, the researcher thinks ahead to how he or she will record and organise data for analysis. He or she pilot tests the questionnaire with a small set of respondents similar to those in the final survey” (Neuman, 1997:232).

The questionnaire had the appropriate properties that were employed in order to validate and render reliable information. The properties of the questionnaire are briefly listed and discussed below.

3.7.3.1.1 LOCATION OF THE SCHOOL

This property did not feature explicitly in the questionnaire. The researcher knew the location of each sampled school and the intention was to have schools from rural, peri-urban areas (township schools) and urban areas. Examples from such schools were sampled. The conditions in these schools are totally different from one other. These schools are also made up of a cross-section of the greater Newcastle population. For example there are Africans, Coloureds, Indians and Whites.

3.7.3.1.2 GENDER

Gender was another of the questionnaire’s properties. A perspective from females and males was sought so that the responses are not biased towards a particular gender group. 95 males and 105 females were sampled in the survey.

3.7.3.1.3 AFFILIATION

Since the questionnaire covered many aspects related to unions, it is evident that distinct categories of union affiliation were needed. Educators sampled belonged to quite a variety of unions represented in the province and countrywide. Affiliation categories included members from the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU), the National Professional Teachers' Union (NAPTU-NAPTOSA), the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysunie (SAOU), the South African Union for Vocational and Specialized Education (SAUVSE), the Association of Professional Educators of KwaZulu-Natal (APEK) and even non-affiliates.

3.7.3.1.4 AGE

Age categories ranged from 22 to 60 years. The aim was to include a variety of opinions from young, middle-aged and old educators so that the sample is as fully representative as possible.

3.7.3.1.5 EXPERIENCE

Respondents were drawn from a pool of educators with varied experience. A sample was randomly drawn from educators with experience ranging from two to thirty-five years. This was done to avoid a biased opinion from either inexperienced "protest culture" educators or extremely conservative "old school" educators. It aimed to include attitudes from both worlds, from the old and new dispensations.

3.7.3.1.6 QUALIFICATIONS

The sample covered respondents with a lowest qualification of one teaching diploma right up to the master's degree. It was also interesting to note the difference in responses according to the differences in qualifications.

3.7.3.1.7 POSITION OF INFLUENCE

The survey covered educators, heads of department, deputy principals, principals and few circuit and district managers. The aim was to elicit, as far as possible, an unbiased opinion.

3.7.3.2 INTERVIEWS

Unstructured interviews were conducted with two district managers and two circuit managers.

3.7.3.3 NOTICES AND CIRCULARS

These notices included notices issued by unions to their members. The tone and the contents revealed very clearly that relations are not good amongst personnel in education. Other notices advised and warned educators about deadlines to be met in so far as duties were concerned. Another category of circulars was issued by the departments (circuits, districts, regions and head office) to principals, school management and to staff about issues of contention. Some of these issues include duty loads, termination of contracts, redeployment, bargaining and collective agreements.

3.7.3.4 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

Statistics are presented in the form of graphs and tables in order to ensure clear and valid interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In this chapter the findings of this study will be discussed with reference to the hypotheses that have been tested. It will be presented in the form of a short narrative and supplemented with graphs and tables.

4.1 HUMAN RELATIONS

Respondents who indicated that their experience of human relations in education is positive were 8/200 which translates into 4%. Respondents who believed that these relations are acceptable under the circumstance were 74/200 or 37% and those who believed human relations are negative and strained were 118/200 or 59%. The following pie graph illustrates these results.

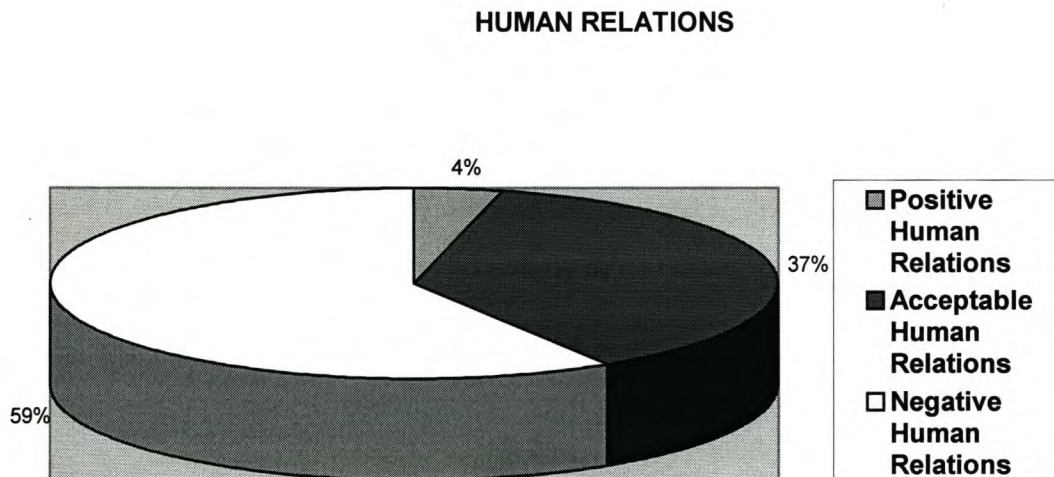


Table 4.1.1

4.2 POSSIBLE CAUSES OF STRAINED OR NEGATIVE RELATIONS

The respondents were given eleven options as possible causes of negative human relations. In the case of option twelve respondents had the opportunity to state any other reason. All the options had to be rated in order of importance. Table 4.1.2 reflects the options and causes and their ratings by the respondents.

Most important reasons for the assessed negative human relations in education.

Rating As Cause No	No plan	Non consul- tation	Insubordi- nation	Salaries	Conde- scend	Affirm. Action	Corp- punish	Equip- ment	Recogn- ise Ed. achieve	Lack of Prais e	LRA
1	09	10	01	19	-	-	20	18	15	15	27
2	08	07	02	10	05	-	16	15	17	11	14
3	01	08	-	12	05	01	10	16	16	13	18
4	06	03	05	17	03	01	13	14	15	14	16
5	01	08	08	16	03	02	14	13	12	13	14
6	02	03	06	04	06	-	12	15	15	12	08
7	02	01	08	01	05	04	05	04	06	16	02
8	03	03	03	05	06	07	03	04	02	04	02
9	03	02	04	04	04	07	03	02	04	06	03
10	04	04	03	01	05	06	03	06	03	08	04
11	06	05	01	02	-	12	02	-	-	04	06

Table 4.1.2

The options that were rated much higher than others are salaries, corporal punishment (abolition), equipment and facilities, recognition of educational achievement, lack of praise and the Labour Relations Act (LRA). These results will be discussed further in chapter 5.

4.3 HYPOTHESES

The questionnaire tested fifteen hypotheses. Table 4.1.3 lists the responses of both educators and management to the various hypotheses.

Hypothesis		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		Ed	Man	Ed	Man	Ed	Man	Ed	Man	Ed	Man
VSP	4.1	04	03	15	03	16	03	40	15	65	36
Ed. as "temp"	4.2	-	-	01	01	08	-	41	13	90	46
Refuse duty	4.3	06	01	21	05	26	05	51	15	36	34
Moratorium on transfers	4.4	02	02	13	03	28	02	41	13	56	40
Refuse redeployment	4.5	07	02	09	09	31	03	61	16	32	30
Acting Allowance	4.6	08	-	-	03	25	01	59	10	48	46
No increase on further ed.	4.7	01	01	03	05	05	03	51	06	80	45
Forced Admission	4.8	01	01	08	02	18	-	46	17	67	40
Refuse pay	4.9	03	-	01	-	04	01	54	11	78	48
Prevent Admission	4.10	03	03	17	04	39	08	55	32	26	13
Target Manager	4.11	14	01	23	05	30	07	26	15	47	32
Unprotected Manager	4.12	05	-	22	04	29	07	54	19	30	30
Conflict GB/Unions	4.13	02	01	09	07	33	04	55	18	41	30

Table 4.1.3

NB: Ed = Educators

Man = Management

To note: Horizontally the table reflects the statistics on hypotheses comprising of 200 respondents.

Vertically the table reflects rating of cause in terms of the importance of 13 hypotheses.

All hypotheses were proved to be correct beyond reasonable doubt. Respondents who strongly agree and agree, clearly outnumber those who neither agree nor disagree, or strongly disagree and disagree. Both the proving and disproving of these hypotheses will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The table makes it clear that the situation in the Department of Education in KwaZulu-Natal leaves a lot to be desired. There are important matters that need urgent attention if education in the province is to fulfil its expected role.

4.4 COMMITMENT TO TEACHING

In this option, the respondents were asked whether educators' commitment to teaching had changed over the past five years (1994 – 1998) or not. The results are as follows:

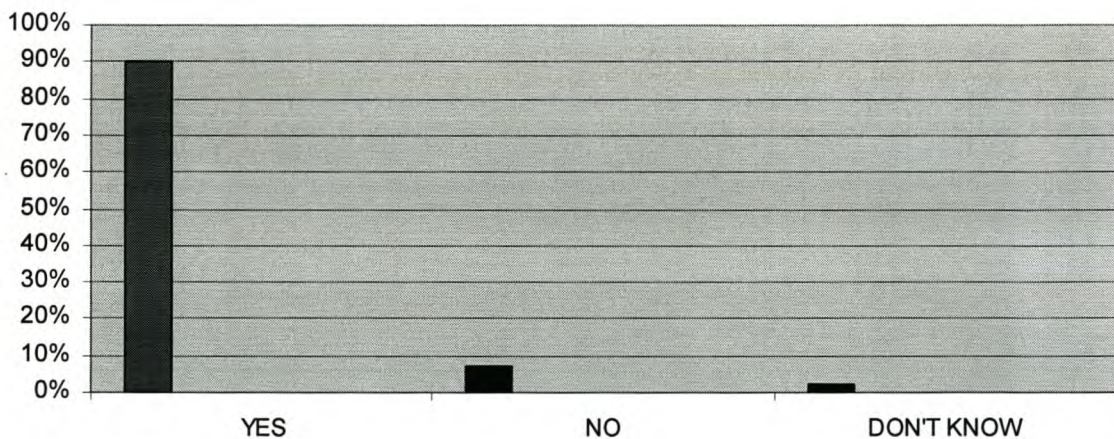


Table 4.1.4

Respondents were also asked whether commitment changes over the past five years had improved or deteriorated. The overwhelming response was that they had deteriorated: 194 (97%) respondents versus 6 (3%), who opted for improved:

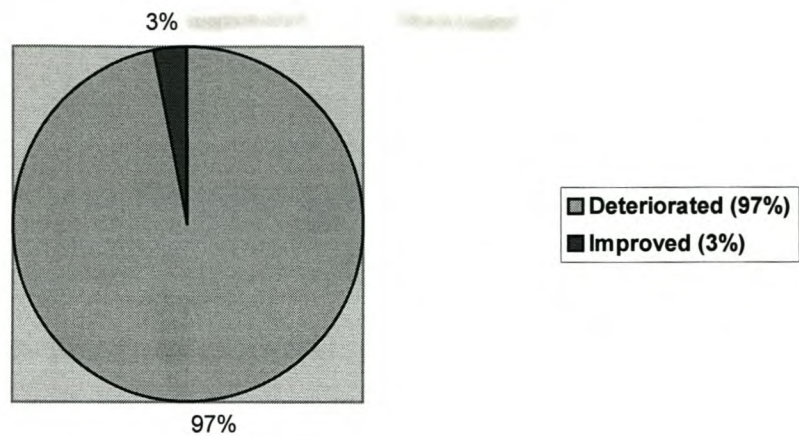


Table 4.1.5

When asked whether educators’ commitment to teaching should not be influenced by the level of pay, 44% (88/200) agreed, 35% (10/200) said that it would have some influence, while 21% (42/200) were of the opinion that the level of pay definitely affected commitment.

Next, the following question was asked: “What would be the best way for management to ensure quality work performance?” The response to the four options was as follows:

- A. Performance audit on educators
- 1 = 37 > 18.5%
- 2 = 96 > 48%
- 3 = 45 > 22.5%
- 4 = 19 > 9.5

By combining all these options, it is clear that the majority of respondents (56%) acknowledge the influence of the level of pay on commitment. The deterioration of annual results apparently confirms this result.

- B. Positive intervention:
- 1 = 52 > 26%
- 2 = 112 > 56%
- 3 = 23 > 11.5%
- 4 = 16 > 8%

- C. Involve union site committee:
- 1 = 23 > 11.5%

2 = 56 > 28%

3 = 61 > 30.5%

4 = 34 > 17%

D. Recommend a charge of misconduct:

1 = 11 > 5.5%

2 = 28 > 14%

3 = 40 > 20%

4 = 102 > 51%

4.5 UNDERSTANDING AND FUNCTIONING OF THE LRA

On this issue the respondents were asked whether they are familiar with the LRA. They had to choose between 'yes' and 'no' options. 'Yes' respondents (out of 200) were 111 (55.5%) compared to 89 (44.5%) 'no' respondents. This indicates that a lot of work has to be done to familiarise the educators with the provisions and requirements of the new labour legislation.

As a follow-up to the above, the respondents were asked to assess their level of knowledge and understanding of the LRA. 48.5% indicated that they know only the basics of the law. 26.5% know only some sections of the Act, whereas 10% know considerably large sections. Only 3.5% knew the Act in its entirety, while 11.5% knew nothing at all. This result is not encouraging.

The follow-up question was:

"How did you gain this knowledge and understanding?" It produced the following rating of the different options listed:

<u>OPTION</u>	<u>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</u>	<u>PERCENTILE AS</u>
1. Through my union	57	28.5%
2. My own initiative e.g. reading and consulting	92	46%
3. Crash course by the Department	17	8.5%
4. Private study at an institution	18	9%
5. Being a portfolio member of the union	33	16.5%

Some respondents chose three options. Namely, that they received knowledge and understanding of the Act through their union, from their own initiative or from being a portfolio member of their union. 161 respondents (80.5%) responded in this manner.

In responding to the sensitive issue of retrenchments (“How do you think retrenchments should be structured?”) respondents were offered six options. They were asked to indicate all the responses applicable to their opinions.

The results were as follows:

<u>OPTION</u>	<u>RETRENCHMENT ON THE BASIS OF:</u>	<u>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</u>	<u>PERCENTILE RANKING</u>
1.	55 Years of age and older	128	64%
2.	Phased out qualifications e.g. PTC, JSTC, SEC if not upgraded	21	10.5%
3.	Failure to honour the employment contract	107	53.5%
4.	Last in first out (LIFO) system	08	4%
5.	Presently under – demanded subjects e.g. History, Afrikaans, Biblical Studies, IsiZulu, etc.	29	14.5%
6.	Provincial or National Education budget	04	2%

The preference was clearly for retrenchments based on 55 years of age and older and failure to honour the employment contract (e.g. absenteeism and incapacity). These

two options were concurrently rated at 58.5%. Retrenchment based on financial position of the provincial and national budget, (as is the case presently) was emphatically rejected (only 2%).

4.6 TRAINING NEEDS

The survey revealed that very few educators had received any training in human relations. 47 (23.5%) indicated that they had some kind of training which incorporated either human relations, team building or reconciliation. 60 (30%) said they had never had any such training whatsoever. 93 (46.5%) did not even respond to the question.

In response to this question: “Do you think undergoing regular programs in human relations will improve cooperation among partners in education?” the answers were as follows. 185 (92.5%) with a ‘yes’ and 15 (7.5%) with a ‘no’. When they were asked whether they have any suggestions for improving the situation, they proposed a number of training courses and other general suggestions as will be seen in Chapter 5.

4.7 FUNDING OF EDUCATION

The question on funding was asked because of the education budget’s severe limitations and the fact that 90% of both provincial and national budget is spent on educators’ salaries. Respondents were asked to suggest possible solutions or improvements. Their responses are outlined hereunder.

<u>OPTIONS</u>	<u>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</u>	<u>PERCENTILE RANKING</u>
1. Tax increase	57	28.5%
2. Moratorium on further salary adjustments	92	46%
3. Parents should buy books and provide for other services (except salaries)	17	8.5%
4. Privatization of state enterprises	18	9%

Options 1 and 2 were supported by 74.5% of the respondents. Other possibilities that were suggested will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.8 THE PROBLEM

The study has shown that human relations between educators, management and the department are extremely strained. Of two hundred (200) educators (including management) surveyed, 118 (59%) indicated that human relations are negative and / or strained. It is, therefore, up to researchers and the Department of Education itself to come up with policy guidelines to remedy this situation.

In the ensuing paragraphs I am going to outline systematically what I have found in my research in conjunction with what the literature says. However, I will not delve much into research findings, as this will be done in the chapters that follow.

Here, I will highlight those issues that were rated as cause number one to five by most respondents.

Ratin g as cause	No pla n	Non consu lt	Insu b- ordi nati on	Sala ry	Con- desce nd	Affir m Actio n	Cor p puni sh	Equ ipm ent	Recog n Ed achie ve	Prai se	LR A
1	09	10	01	19	-	-	20	18	15	15	27
2	08	07	02	10	05	-	16	15	17	11	14
3	01	08	-	12	05	01	10	16	16	13	18
4	06	03	05	17	03	01	13	14	15	14	16
5	01	08	08	16	03	02	14	13	12	13	14
6	02	03	06	04	06	-	12	15	15	12	08
7	02	01	08	01	05	04	05	04	06	16	02
8	03	03	03	05	06	07	03	04	02	04	02
9	03	02	04	04	04	07	03	02	04	06	03
10	04	04	03	01	05	06	03	06	03	08	04
11	06	05	01	02	-	12	02	-	-	04	06

From the above table it is clear that management without proper planning is one of the causes that bring about bad human relations. Those who rated this aspect as cause number one are 09 respondents. When the respondents from 1 to 5 are grouped together the figure goes up to 25 out of 200 respondents who rated management without proper planning as a cause, which is 12,5 %.

This indicates a problem if one recognizes that the management was also part of the survey. They also viewed themselves as people who do not devote much of their time to planning. 25 respondents ascribe a lack of planning, as a cause on the slot of 1-5, and 36 rate non-consultation and lack of communication as a major cause. That is 18 % of the total sample taken. No organisation can function properly without consultation and communication. These two aspects are confused by educators to mean that management does not know what they should do in the organisation. It is true that in any given organization some matters are only privy to management. Consultation also means that the subordinates are not taken as indecisive people, they also have brains, it is only that they are not yet managers.

Consultation and communication yield results in an organisation so that everyone involved will assume ownership of the organisation for the realisation of its goals. "Given a result-oriented style of leadership, it is essential that teachers and school leaders learn that the art and science of participatory leadership (leadership that assumes the commitment of followers) rather than a command and control style of leadership..." (Schlechty, 1997:113).

Insubordination was rated low as a cause, even though it was expected to rate very highly. Salaries are also one of the major causes of low morale and bad human relations among the partners in education. 19 respondents rated salaries as cause number one and when the aggregate number of respondents who rated salaries between causes 1 to 5 came to 74, which is 37 %. Now, this is not something that can be overlooked. Strikes, in the province and even nationwide are caused by salaries in most cases.

Condescending by management is also one of the issues that I thought the respondents, especially educators, would rate higher. To my surprise, and I hope every reader will find it alarming, this aspect was not rated by any respondent as cause number one. Those who rated it between causes 2 to 5 were 16 out of 200 respondents, which is 8%. Affirmative action for women was not a big issue among respondents.

Another source of conflict according to the survey was the abolition of corporal punishment. 20 respondents rated this aspect as cause number one, and 16 as cause number 2. The aggregate number of respondents who rated the abolition of corporal punishment in schools between causes 1 to 5 is 73. This is about 37%. Punishing a misbehaving learner has been part of our education system for a long time. The Constitution has abolished the use of corporal punishment. Educators have had some satisfaction when using alternative punishments to instill discipline. Even though their salaries are so basic and not commensurate with their qualification and service, learners respect them. They had a quasi status. Today nothing is even left of that kind of status.

The document on “Understanding the SA Schools Act” issued by the Department of Education (1997:62) has this to say on corporal punishment: **“It is therefore illegal for anybody to apply corporal punishment in respect of any learner at a public or independent (private) school. Parents may not give principals or teachers permission to use corporal punishment. In addition to formal corporal punishment, non-formal uses of force such as slapping and rough handling are also prohibited.**

Anyone who ignores this regulation and applies corporal punishment at a school, commits an offence and can be charged in a court of law and punished.”

Lack of equipment and facilities has been rated as another major cause of disharmony in education. 18 respondents rated this issue as cause number one and 15 respondents as cause number two. The aggregate number of respondents who rated it between 1 to 5 is 76, which comes to 38%. Funding is a big problem for the province since almost 92% of its budget is spent on salaries and 8% on other aspects including equipment and facilities.

To illustrate, an educator with an M+4 qualification was put into category D and if the educator studies further he or she could be put into category E, irrespective of the rank or post level. As of now, the Department has introduced ‘salary banding’ which is the determination of salary by post level rather than by educational achievement. Salary categories have been phased out. When the educator attains another educational achievement he or she gets what is called an award which is three thousand rand (R 3,000) once off and is not followed by a raise. If there is a raise, it is very nominal.

The respondents rated praise by the supervisor in recognition of good performance as a dearth. I suppose that despite low salaries and non-recognition of educational achievement, praise by the supervisor can raise the spirits of educators.

The aggregate of 89 out of 200 respondents rated the application of the LRA at a category of 1 to 5, which can be interpreted as 44.5%.

There was another section in the questionnaire where the forced choice method was not used but respondents were asked to specify other unlisted reasons which they think are possible reasons for the state of affairs. There was also myriad of factors that were put forward. In this case I have listed the reasons and sometimes the number of respondents who mentioned the issue. Where I have not indicated, it means only one respondent mentioned that specific issue.

4.8.1 OTHER FACTORS MENTIONED BY THE EDUCATORS

- a) Favouritism
- b) Overcrowding in schools leading to poor performance (02).
- c) Uncertainty about standards of matric results (03).
- d) Uncertainty about future of the career (05).
- e) Culture of resistance and rebellion by educators.
- f) Reduction in housing subsidy.
- g) Lack of discipline (learners and educators).
- h) Public defamation of educators by the department.
- i) Lack of equity in promotions.
- j) Requirement to maintain standards despite weaker and much larger classes.

4.8.2 OTHER FACTORS MENTIONED BY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

- a) Pupil – teacher ratio (rated as cause number 1)
- b) Incompetence of the department (rated as cause number 1)
- c) Overlooking the role of male educators as role models of discipline.
- d) Lack of responsibility and accountability and authoritarianism of the department.
- e) Lack of understanding of importance of education e.g. staff and budget cuts.

4.9 ON STATEMENTS PEOPLE MAKE ABOUT THE SITUATION IN EDUCATION

Respondents were required to state whether they strongly agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement. There were fifteen statements in this section. These statements were carefully selected among many statements that are normally said to be problems in the education system in the Greater Newcastle. These statements have to be put into test for them to be either prove or disproved. I will briefly discuss some of them hereunder.

4.9.1 UNREGULATED VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE PACKAGES AND THEIR EFFECTS

The statement stated that these unregulated VSPs which allowed young and well-qualified personnel to go to the private sector had very negative affects in KwaZulu-Natal education. 101 out of 200 and 55 out of 200 strongly agreed and agreed respectively which represents 78% of the sample. This proves a point that there is a flux of problems in education.

HRM Circular 14/96 paragraph 4.3 reads like this, **“The time is now appropriate for all educators (in whatever type of institution they serve) to apply for the voluntary severance package if they wish to do so.”** This circular came from the then acting superintendent – general. Resolution number 3/96 paragraph 1.9 (a) (1) of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) reads,,: **“Any educator may volunteer for a severance package, (), in order to allow educators who prefer to leave the service, to do so...”**

4.9.2 QUALIFIED EDUCATORS LABELED AS “TEMPORARY EDUCATORS”

A temporary educator is an educator who either occupies a substantive or temporary post but whose contract ends after a specified period, which is always shorter than or equal to a year. The questionnaire statement referred to the labeling of qualified educators as temporary by mere date of appointment. Previously a temporary educator would be an unqualified educator who relieves/substitutes an educator on study or accouchement leave.

136 out of 200 (68%) strongly agreed and 54 out of 200 (27%) agreed that this state of affairs lowered the morale of educators.

4.9.3 REFUSAL BY TRADE UNIONS TO TAKE UP DUTY LOADS

The statement reads as, **“Refusal by teacher’s unions to take up duty loads of terminated temporary educators, throws doubt on the KZN Department of Education’s ability to act as an employer.”** Duty load here refers to the task of teaching the subject or subjects, which is characterized by an allocated number of periods per class, per subject and per week.

The unions, though they later agreed, refused for quite a long time to take up loads in solidarity with the terminated educators. Section 187 (1) (c) of the LRA (Act 66, 1995) states as an automatically unfair dismissal: **“to compel the employee to accept a demand in respect of any matter of mutual interest between the employer and employee”**, if the educators could be forced to accept this instruction or face dismissal if they refuse.

4.9.4 THE LINE MANAGER IS OFTEN THE TARGET OF INTIMIDATION BY UNIONS

In the Greater Newcastle, at the time of writing this research report, there were some displaced personnel (school managers) due to violence or intimidation caused by members of staff. A displaced person is an employee who, due to reasons of violence or intimidation, executes his/her duties at a school other than that to which his/her pay is directed.

This is usually done by the circuit or district as an internal arrangement which, anyway, through circumstances becomes officially known to the head office without any recrimination.

The department after some investigations recommends a new place of employment if it finds reasons satisfactory to it and if not; it recommends the educator (manager) to assume duties at the very place where he/she was intimidated. Paragraph 1.11 of HRM Circular 12/97 of KwaZulu Natal Education reads,: **“If the decision is that the reasons for non-attendance at the place of employment is without just cause, the educator will be advised in writing by registered or hand delivered mail:**

- (a) That the educator must, within 14 days of receipt of the letter, report to the appointed employment. If the educator fails to report for duty, the services of the educator shall be terminated without further notice.”**

Paragraph 1.13 of the same circular quotes Section 8 (1) (c) of the Educators Employment to read as follows: **“An educator may, subject to the provision of the Education Labour Relations Act, be discharged by the employer if, for reasons other than his own incompetence or incapacity, his discharge will promote efficiency or economy at the state educational institution in question.”**

The Education Labour Relations Act referred to above has long been repealed and replaced by the universal Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 and this HRM circular was written and issued on 10 March 1997.

Also the Educators Employment Act was to undergo drastic change at the beginning of 1998 hence it is now called the Employment of Educators Act.

Research results, here, have attested to the fact school managers are indeed intimidated by unions hence 73/140 respondents fell on category of strongly agree and agree, which is represented as 52.1%. The respondents were ordinary educators. Management who strongly agreed and agreed was represented by 47/60, which is 78,3% of the sample. When grouped together the management and educators come up with a figure of 120 out of 200, which is a total of 60% of the sample.

Kemp in SA Journal of Labour Relations, Vol.22/1 Autumn 1998:9 says the: **“power (and right) to manage the organisation is usually contractually vested in management. However, in practice it is found that subordinates often challenge management’s right to manage, thereby attempting to define the relationship as symmetrical (that of equals)”**. This is very true of the situation on the ground. Schlechty (1997:104) reiterates the role of management by saying,: **“One of the obligations of people in top level positions is to lead. They are required by their roles to do so, and if they do not, the group may have no leadership.”**

HRM Circular 19/98 paragraph 8 had this to say to principals,: **“Principals are hereby directed to ensure that the process of teaching and learning is not in any way disrupted as a result of the refusal to accept a lawful instruction. If there is disruption to teaching and learning as a result of such refusal by any member of staff, principals are directed to report such instances immediately to the Department so that disciplinary action can be taken against such employees without delay. Failure to report such action will be viewed in an extremely serious light”**.

The management staff was locked between two opposing ends, the unions on one hand, of which they are members too, and the Department on the other, as an employer to which they have an obligation. At the end they had to be victims of either side depending on what they do or do not do. Educators, per survey, agree that the department as an employer does not adequately protect school managers. 84/140 educators strongly agreed and agreed with this statement. So 60% of the sample confirmed the researcher’s opinion. The management personnel agreed by 48 out of 60, which represents 80% of the total sample. The aggregate of management and educators was 132 out of 200, which represents 66% of the sample.

4.9.5 HOW EDUCATORS ASSESSED THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT

The Labour Relations Act (No 66 of 1995) is the powerful mechanism that regulates the employer – employee relationship. It contains pertinent information on freedom of association, collective bargaining, strikes and lock – outs, workplace forums, trade unions and employer’s organisations, dispute resolution, unfair dismissal and other general provisions. Everything that affects the employer – employee relationship is referred to this Act.

When the educators (including management) were asked whether they were familiar with this Act, the responses were somehow alarming. 437% of educators said they were familiar but this was also measured in terms of extent of familiarity. 53% said they were not familiar at all.

Positive response from management was 75% e.g. 45 out of 60 and negative response was 25% represented by 15 out of 60. One can then realize that potential conflict is always imminent because it is not usually management that goes on strike but ordinary educators.

Those who said they knew only the basics, among those who already said they were familiar with the Act, were 62 out of 140 for educators and 35 out of 60 for management that is represented by 44.2% and 58% respectively. Those who indicated that they know considerably large sections, but not the whole Act, were 12 out of 140 for educators and 8 out of 60 for management respectively. This is a very small percentage in terms of the sample taken. To my surprise all respondents, to countermand the situation, indicated that knowledge and understanding of the Act will result in good human relations and that good guidance on individual and collective rights will prevail.

There was also a section on training needs of educators. The question was asked whether respondents had any training in human relations, reconciliation or team building and the response was also shocking. 23 out of 140 indicated that they had some kind of training on these aspects. 24 out of 140 did not have any training and 93 respondents did not bother responding to this question.

CHAPTER 5

A DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The survey produced interesting and important insights that will be discussed in more detail in this chapter, together with the researcher's own interpretation of the significance of the data.

5.2 THE STATE OF HUMAN RELATIONS IN EDUCATION

The study revealed that, in general, human relations in education in the areas surveyed are negative and strained. 59% of the sample attested to this and the situation can be described as serious. Reece and Brandt (1996:8) contend that human relations are "further complicated by the fact that people must manage three types of relationships." They cite these types of relationships as (1) the relationship with ourselves, (2) one to one relationships which take place in both personal and work life and (3) relationships with the members of one's group.

From the survey it would appear that strained relations are to be found on all three levels. The self-image of educators is poor because individual educators seem disillusioned by the conditions in the profession. Many educators are busy with personal development in fields outside education, with a view to leaving the profession when they attain qualification in those fields.

Individual attitudes will obviously also affect the second type of relationship (one-to-one relationships) with co-workers because each one of these individuals in a school situation depends on the assistance of others to make the system function harmoniously. For different reasons, disillusioned individuals will at some point come together and see those in management as the common enemy, because management represent the employer on the school site.

The consolidation of individual disillusionment, first at different sites (schools), tends to accelerate and accumulate and is then blamed on school management. Soon it reaches branch level and manifests itself in incidents of "go slows" (whereby educators report for duty but do not undertake any duty) and work-to-rule. Once it reaches district level the whole process becomes very difficult to control. This

development can be compared to a whirlwind ultimately developing into a tornado. At this point all efforts will be directed toward the regional level of education, leading to a disruption of day to day activities. Strike action spreads and as other regions join in. The end result can be a general strike.

Deteriorating human relations, as revealed, eventually develop into a problem of industrial or labour relations. Reece and Brandt (1996:6) assert that “we now live in a service economy, which means that relationships are becoming more important than physical products.” I agree with this statement because a school is a service organisation that has learners and parents as its clients. A proper return on the investment in education can reasonably be expected in the form of learners who go to tertiary institutions and come back to serve the community. The issue is not only to have sufficient numbers of educators but also to ensure sound human relations.

“The task of the Ministry of Education, compared with some of the other ministries, [is] formidable in that education is traditionally one of the most contested and difficult areas to control as it plays such an important role in providing access to upward social and economic mobility and involves so many interactions and mediations.” (Francine de Clercq, 1997:135)

Let me go back to the statistics on human relations. 74/200 (37%) of the sampled respondents said the state of human relations in education is acceptable under the current circumstances. What does this mean in actual fact? One could infer that this response means that respondents believe that it could have been worse given the circumstances within the education system in the two districts. This could also be interpreted as meaning that problems in education have become part of organisational culture. Reece and Brandt, (1996:17) contend that all people’s efforts or actions have the potential to create conflict. They further state that “it is only within the past few decades that management, behavioral science researchers, and industry experts have recognized that human relations problems can have considerable impact on organisational productivity.”

Only 4% of respondents experienced human relations as positive and harmonious. This in itself proves beyond reasonable doubt that the issue of human relations needs prompt attention. The Education Department, as an organisation, cannot fulfil its role

with this potential conflict hovering below, and sometimes above, the surface. An organisation's objectives are always achieved when the staff is fairly happy.

5.3 POSSIBLE CAUSES OF STRAINED HUMAN RELATIONS

Eleven possible causes of strained human relations were suggested in the questionnaire. Five of the most prominent reasons given will be discussed in this section.

5.3.1 ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

10% of the total sample rated the abolition of corporal punishment as the number one cause of the bad state of human relations in schools.

8% as second and 5% as third most important cause followed this respectively. It is clear that educators hold strong views on the matter.

The government outlawed corporal punishment in schools in terms of the new constitution. This was, and still is, seen as political expediency by most educators. This is a very difficult issue in a time of transition. Everybody understands that we, as a country, are fresh from a resistance culture whereby the sole aim was to render the state and its structures ungovernable. But, whether these tactics are suitable in a phase of reconstruction and building up of a new educational system, is another matter. The present generation of students often does not take the full context into account and uses the ban on corporal punishment very effectively to their own advantage. At the same time educators are expected to produce better results each year.

Corporal punishment is not similar to capital punishment, but it serves as a remedial or correctional mechanism. Even in the case of capital punishment change could be revisited. The state always says that capital punishment is not a crime deterrent. The state operates with actions reminiscent of the old regime, in an era that is supposed to be new and distinct from the old. Capital punishment did not deter political activists, that was a political cause for which they were prepared to die and they specifically mentioned that. But capital punishment can deter crime. In turn, corporal punishment can deter unruly the behaviour of learners.

5.3.2 LACK OF EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

The percentage of respondents who placed the lack of facilities as at least the sixth most important cause for low morale amongst educators (out of eleven possibilities), was 46%, (6.5% as cause number 5; 7% as cause number 4; 8% as cause number 3; 7.5% as cause number 2 and 9% as cause number 1).

In every professional environment appropriate and adequate facilities are crucial to work efficiency and the morale of employees. Poor performance where such facilities are not available cannot be attributed to lack of motivation or qualifications on the side of educators. Good performance can only be expected where the infrastructure for the expected performance is in place.

In response to item 4.4 of the questionnaire (suggestions to improve the situation), one manager, per survey questionnaire, wrote: **“The Department must have clear vision, do research first then come up with good policies instead of blaming teachers”**. Schlechty (1997:102) asks this question, “How should schools be structured? For example, should the rules, roles, and relationships that shape behavior in schools be designed on the assumption that what teachers do and how they perform is the critical determinant of the quality of school life, or is it more appropriate to focus on what students do and how they perform?” I have observed quite a number of educators doing their best under the circumstances. They succeeded in providing quality education to their learners. This indicates that educators could do much more if equipment and facilities were available. Further confirmation comes from the fact that in the greater Newcastle area the former White and Indian schools do extremely well (often with a 100% pass rate) in comparison with township and rural schools. These schools are also better facilitated and equipped than rural and township schools.

The lack of facilities and equipment impacts negatively on township and rural schools. Parents take their children to urban schools in growing numbers. What does this do to educators in township and rural areas? It demoralises them and, to add insult to injury, they stand the chance of being deployed. Because of the dwindling learner population, they can be declared ‘excessive’. This lack of facilities is not their fault but clearly the responsibility of the department.

5.3.3 LACK OF RECOGNITION FOR EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The response to this item was as follows:

<u>CAUSE RANKING</u>	<u>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</u>
First most important cause	15
Second most important cause	17
Third most important cause	16
Fourth most important cause	15
Fifth most important cause	12
Sixth most important cause	15
TOTAL	90

These statistics are based on a sample of 200 respondents. 90 respondents represent 45% of the sample. The department needs highly skilled educators to ensure quality teaching and learning. On the other hand, it does not fully recognise further educational achievement in terms of salaries. The present award system, whereby the educator is given a “once off” bonus without affecting basic salaries, illustrates the problem.

One cannot escape the impression that the rhetoric regarding the need for highly skilled educators is a political one used by politicians for purposes other than the actual needs in the classroom. “As an alternative to rhetorical legitimization of policy, there is also a process orientated towards ‘buying off’ participants on the basis of occupational and educational achievement.

However, this process generates a ‘crisis of expectations’ which the State cannot meet.” (Wallace, Miller & Ginsburg, 1983: 109)

The survey confirms the statement that the department is gradually generating a crisis of expectations which the unions are bound to exploit very effectively for their own purposes. The KZN Department of Education urgently needs a coherent policy to guide its own human resource management system like any other organisation. It should know who its employees are, the skills they have, how good they are and how they should be developed. The skills inventory of the department should be the basis on which the allocation of financial resources to this important human resource is decided.

In view of educational achievement as a very effective instrument used by most organisations to attract quality staff, the system is in need of drastic change. The teaching profession must not become a last resort for prospective employees through the department's lack of recognition for educational achievement. The way in which the department treats its workforce will not escape a harsh judgement. Every organisation, including government departments, functions in a world of economic realities. These realities do not favour managers who are unable to anticipate the effect of market forces.

The possibilities are good that the department is going to have a 'supply and demand' breakdown. It will experience a serious shortage of educators in the foreseeable future because prospective educators will opt for other fields that offer more attractive prospects. In fact, this has happened in the natural, the economic and management sciences. This could lead to a situation where the department is forced to pay even higher sums to attract suitable staff. This will impinge on other activities within the department.

It would seem a much wiser policy to pay fair wages and thereby retain and encourage experienced and well qualified educators to remain within the system.

Sherman and Bohlander (1992:314) have this to say on an organisation's ability to pay good salaries: "An organisation's ability to pay has a big impact on its general level of compensation. The level of productivity, its profitability, its size and its competitors are all determinants of its ability to generate revenues for paying its human resource needs."

Salary progression is one of the major motivating factors in any organisation. In the same vein, a skilled workforce is the pride of an organisation. South Africa is fast becoming part of the global community after many years of political and cultural isolation. International standards are going to be the criterion for acceptability. These standards will be entry points for potential investments on education by the international community. However, standards must always be commensurate with fair pay structure on the organisation's side.

5.3.4 LACK OF RECOGNITION FOR GOOD PERFORMANCE BY THE SUPERVISOR

The ranking of this aspect by the respondents was as follows:

RANKING AS POSSIBLE CAUSE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
As cause number 1	15
2	11
3	13
4	14
5	13
6	12
TOTAL	78

This means that the respondents who ranked lack of recognition by the supervisor as one of the major possible causes of bad human relations are presented at 39%. Praise is the articulation of feelings of appreciation and encouragement by the supervisor for good or positive behaviour. A subordinate with a positive attitude contributes to the enhancement of the image of the profession in the eyes of the public it serves. This kind of employee reflects on the competence of the supervisor. The efficiency of the subordinates adds to the good name of the head of a section or division.

It is sadly the case that those on higher levels of management often claim the reward for good performance that in actual fact is due to subordinates. The psychological importance of recognition and its direct link to improved performance should never be overlooked. Hersey et al (1996:407) contend that praises “drive all effective human interaction. These same concepts apply to any relationship, not only making better managers but also making them better parents, spouses, friends and customers.” Praise is therefore the spice that seasons the relationship between a subordinate and the supervisor, resulting in employees being faithful to the organisation.

The response clearly illustrates how important recognition is for improving morale. To quote Hersey et al (1996:406): “[once] your people understand what you are asking them to do and what good behaviour looks like, you are ready for the second key to obtaining the desired performance: the one minute praising is the most

powerful activity a manager can do. In fact, it is the key to training and making winners of everyone working for you.”

Why do supervisors (school managers) find it so difficult to praise their subordinates for good behaviour but are quick to reprimand bad behaviour?

Is it because they want solely to eliminate bad behaviour? The answer is probably that they may think that this is what they will achieve, but they are in fact achieving the direct opposite. When you try to eliminate bad behaviour through reprimand you should also reinforce good behaviour through praise. These are complimentary actions.

“Many problems in life stem not from making mistakes but from not learning from our mistakes” (Hersey et al, 1996:411). Constant criticism by managers without the balance of praise soon becomes ineffective, as subordinates no longer take any heed.

Because of the difficult circumstances under which educators have to work (due to the department’s policies), they are entitled to some emotional support. The message they receive from management should illustrate that that management think that ‘at least you do well despite circumstances that are unfavourable.’

5.3.5 THE WAY THE LRA IS BEING APPLIED TO SCHOOLS

The Labour Relations Act is intended to be a mechanism to regulate the employer – employee relationship. It has different implications for the employer, the school management and the educators. Consequently, the Act often becomes a site of struggle, where each party tries to use the Act and its provisions to its own advantage. In this way, a vicious circle is set in motion.

The response to this item is as follows:

<u>RANKING AS CAUSE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</u>
1	27
2	14
3	18
4	16
5	14
6	08
Total	97

48,5% of respondents see the Act and its implementation as the major cause of bad human relations. This considerable sample includes both managers and educators and it is clear that Act is experienced negatively by both groups.

Unions in particular use the Act as a platform to address issues raised by their membership. “Broader issues are sometimes overemphasized, leading to a disregard for the benefits directly applicable to the worker as an individual. The emphasis therefore tends to shift from reality to ideology, from bread and butter issues to political agendas” (Nel, 1998: 39).

This statement reflects the general state of affairs. KwaZulu Natal as a province and the Department of Education and Culture are both managed by an IFP government at the moment. Political tensions often run high. It is only natural that almost everything that happens is seen as part of a political and ideological struggle. Political agendas tend to engulf educational issues. The majority union in the province, SADTU, is COSATU – affiliated and strongly ANC aligned.

“Furthermore, as the number of representatives increases, the trade union develops a personality of its own and corporate persons who will become more and more remote from the actual work environment. Needs and objectives may become centred mainly on the trade union itself, and no longer relate to the real requirements of the workers” (Nel, 1998:39). The unions are supposed to guide their membership in the correct application of the Labour Relations Act. Often it is interpreted as serving particular interests.

The same can also be said of the employer (Department of Education and Culture) and school managers. These role players are often inaccessible to educators who need guidance. The educators are dependent on their seniors for advice, but because these seniors represent the employer (the department) at school level, the advice that educators receive is not unbiased and often merely serves the interests of management, which is then applied with coercive power.

5.4 TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

The questionnaire contained a number of statements regarding the situation in education. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree or strongly disagree with the statements. The following are the statements presented:

- 5.4.1 Unregulated voluntary severance packages that allowed young and well qualified personnel to go to the private sector had very negative effects in KZN education.**
- 5.4.2 The labeling of qualified educators as temporary (by mere date of appointment), lowered the morale among educators.**
- 5.4.3 Refusal by teacher unions to take up duty loads of terminated temporary educators illustrates the disruptive effect of the LRA.**
- 5.4.4 The moratorium on transfers and the secondments determined by excess posts undermined teacher professionalism.**
- 5.4.5 Refusal by teachers' unions to accept the redeployment of their members in excess posts paralyzes the department's management plan aimed at addressing school inadequacies.**
- 5.4.6 The stoppage of acting allowances has lowered the morale of line managers in schools.**

- 5.4.7 The fact that educators do not receive salary increases when they attain higher education qualifications has discouraged the ideal of quality education and life – long learning.**
- 5.4.8 Forced admission of pupils whose parents refuse to pay school fees lowers the morale of those who do pay.**
- 5.4.9 The refusal to pay school fees hinders attempts by schools to supplement budgeting deficiencies.**
- 5.4.10 Pupils who cannot afford school fees should not be prevented from attending school.**
- 5.4.11 The line managers are often the targets of intimidation by unions.**
- 5.4.12 Line managers are not protected adequately by the department as an employer.**
- 5.4.13 The conflict between governing bodies and teacher unions undermine the professionalism educators would like to attain.**

The following table contains the results:

Hypothesis	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Ed	Man	Ed	Man	Ed	Man	Ed	Man	Ed	Man
VSP	04	03	15	03	16	03	40	15	65	36
Ed as temp	-	-	01	01	08	-	41	13	90	46
Refuse duty	06	01	21	05	26	05	51	15	36	34
Transfer moratorium	02	02	13	03	28	02	41	13	56	40
Refuse redeployment	07	02	09	09	31	03	61	16	32	30
Acting Allowance	08	-	-	03	25	01	59	10	48	46
No Increase on Further Ed	01	01	03	05	05	03	51	06	80	45
Forced Admission	01	01	08	02	18	-	46	17	67	40
Refuse pay	03	-	01	-	04	01	54	11	78	48
Prevent Admission	03	03	17	04	39	08	55	32	26	13
Target Manager	05	-	22	04	29	07	54	19	30	30
Unprotected manager	05	-	22	04	29	07	54	19	30	30
Conflict GB/unions	02	01	09	07	33	04	55	18	41	30

Table 5.4.1

5.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.5.1 UNREGULATED VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE PACKAGES

It is clear that the voluntary severance packages (VSP's) which allowed young and well-qualified personnel to move into the private sector had a very negative effect.

HRM Circular 14/96 paragraph 4.3 urged educators to consider this option: **“The time is now appropriate for all educators (in whatever type of institution they serve) to apply for the voluntary severance package if they wish to do so.”** This circular also attached the Education Labour Relations Council resolution (Resolution 3/1996) which was taken by teachers' unions and the management (the Department). Paragraph 1.9 (a) (i) of this resolution stated that, **“Any educator may volunteer for a severance package, as set out in ANNEXURE A, in order to allow educators who prefer to leave the service, to do so and to create room for the absorption of educators who are in excess”**

Against this background let me come back to the findings of the survey. 46.4% of educators and 60% of managers strongly agree that voluntary severance packages had a negative effect. 29% of educators and 25% of managers agreed with the statement. Those who neither agreed nor disagreed were 11,4% educators. Only 0,3% of educators and 0,5% of managers strongly disagreed. If those who strongly agreed and agreed are added up, the result is an astounding 87%.

NB: $140\text{Ed.} \div 100\% \times 46.4\% = 65 \text{ Ed.}$

$140\text{Ed.} \div 100\% \times 29\% = 41 \text{ Ed.}$

$140\text{Ed.} \div 100\% \times 11.4\% = 16 \text{ Ed.}$

$140\text{Ed.} \div 100\% \times 0.3\% = 0.4 \text{ Ed. (excl'd. in calculations per value)}$

TOTAL $\therefore 122 \text{ Ed.} = 87\%$

$60\text{Man.} \div 100\% \times 60\% = 36 \text{ Man.}$

$60\text{Man.} \div 100\% \times 25\% = 15 \text{ Man.}$

$60\text{Man.} \div 100\% \times 0.5\% = 0.3 \text{ Man. (excl'd. in calculations per value)}$

TOTAL $\therefore 51 \text{ Man.} = 86\%$

$\therefore 122\text{Ed.} + 51\text{Man.} = 173 \text{ or } 87\%\text{Ed.} + 86\%\text{Man.} = 173 \div 200 \times 100 = 87\%$

The Procedure Manual for the Implementation of Resolutions 3/1996 was also attached to this HRM circular 14/96. This manual made it clear that: "The employing department has the right to consider an application on its merits, in respect of key personnel" (paragraph 5.21). However, this procedure was not followed. There are two possible reasons for this omission. The first could be the financial pressure to reduce the huge salary bill. It should also be kept in mind that the department has no other sources of income it can exploit.

The second reason could be that the Provincial Minister of Education had to report to the Cabinet as every minister is charged with the task of ensuring that legislative orders are executed. I have cited previously that the policy of the government is that the public service should be right-sized. Many educators who had the expertise and experience suited for the wider labour market went to the private sector. These members were effectively excluded from public service even if circumstances required a callback because the VSP's were structured in such a way that the

volunteer had no option to return. This state of affairs cannot be resolved in the short term. School managers have to contend with shortages in the natural sciences and in the economic and management sciences. They are told they still have excess educators. Educators in the humanities and languages cause this excess.

“There must be time for plans to be examined, dissent to be heard, alternatives to be put forward and for debate and open discussion. The authority has to be seen to be accountable to the community it serves,”--- (Hewton, 1986:96). It therefore becomes clear that political expediency sometimes has serious negative consequences for the effective functioning of the department. The result is inevitable conflict between the potential partners in education.

The parents, educators, managers and pupils are pressurizing each other to make amends for the shortage of educators in the fields that are favoured by the labour market. The parents think the school managers are not doing all they should do. The learners are often the most unreasonable because they forcefully present their grievances to management, and they stipulate a short unreasonable deadline for the rectification of such grievances. Should their grievances not warrant a preconceived action, they demand the resignation of the management staff. Their demands are often backed by physical actions, for example, forcefully removing the principal from the school grounds and by occupying management's offices. The principal will not be allowed back to the school until the grievance is attended to. This practice is also sometimes carried out with the cooperation of the educators and parents themselves. The relationships between the manager (who experiences such treatment) and the parents and educators, is often damaged permanently.

5.5.2 THE LABELING OF QUALIFIED EDUCATORS AS 'TEMPORARY EDUCATORS'

Educators who were employed after 01 July 1996 were employed in a temporary capacity. Their services were extended as long as the budget allowed them to be employed. Their specialization and experience were secondary considerations. It is a known fact that efficient unions recruit their members at tertiary institutions even before they become actual (professional) educators. These so-called temporary educators are therefore active members of unions in many cases. Unions themselves strongly object to this label.

Table 5.4.1 indicates that 95% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the hypothesis. It can therefore be concluded that this label lowered the morale of educators. Educators experience this as non-recognition of their professionalism. Their appointment is terminated and renewed as and when the budget allows. This situation no doubt damaged human relations severely.

Another important aspect of professionalism is job security. Educators are gradually realizing that their profession is fast becoming insecure. The communiqué sent by the provincial secretary of SADTU in KwaZulu Natal dated 06 May 1998, contains the following information:

06 May 1998

COMMUNIQUÉ

TO ALL: REC's BEC's AND SADTU MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

At a PEC meeting, held on Tuesday, 05 May 1998, to review the present campaign embarked upon by SADTU, the following decisions were reaffirmed:

- 1) The PEC reaffirms its decision in respect of retrenchment.**
- 2) The union remains vehemently opposed to the retrenchment of any educator and therefore rejects the compression of classes and permanent**

teachers taking on extra workloads of educators who have been retrenched.

- 3) SADTU also reaffirms its commitment to protect the jobs of all educators.**
- 4) SADTU recognises that there are schools where there exist gross shortages of educators and demand the immediate redeployment of posts to those understaffed schools.**
- 5) SADTU will challenge the selective payment of salaries to retrenched temporary teachers. Further, under no circumstances must members accept verbal termination of their services as it happens in many districts. Only the Provincial Department has the authority to employ and terminate the services of educators, not ordinary officials of the Department.**

NB: (REC = regional executive committee, BEC = branch executive committee and PEC = provincial executive committee).

The tone of this communiqué illustrates the lack of trust between educators and the department. The labeling of qualified educators as ‘temporary’ in such large numbers is a new trend in education. It is especially disheartening to educators at a time when they had hoped that past inequities will be addressed and removed. At the same time, it is clear that the government is facing a dilemma. The very people affected by the measures of rationalisation, form part of the electorate who placed the government in power. Schlechty (1997:119-120) asserts that “using personnel appointment as a means to ‘clean house and set a new direction’ is a strategy that should be employed rarely and only after the impact on employees’ confidence and willingness to take risk is assessed.”

5.5.3 REFUSAL BY TEACHER UNIONS TO TAKE UP DUTY LOADS OF TERMINATED TEMPORARY EDUCATORS

The survey shows that 68% of the respondents either strongly agree or agree with this hypothesis. An employer has the right to expect employees to follow to instructions issued to them, provided such instructions are reasonable in terms of the LRA.

According to Bendix, (1996:116), “[once] a contract of employment has been entered into, whether in writing, verbally or tacitly, it is accepted that the parties have by implication agreed to certain rights and duties at common law.” The duties of an employer are among others, to pay the employee and provide work for the employee. Bendix further states that the employee also has certain obligations, namely to:

- **Perform his work faithfully and diligently,**
- **Obey reasonable orders given to him in the normal course of his employment (1996:116)**

In fairness, it must be acknowledged that the department did try to democratise the educational system, despite many problems. It instructed schools to form staffing committees, which included one governing body member, two members of staff and the principal. The department wanted schools to discuss rationalisation so that they could co-determine who must be transferred with a possible assignment to an alternative school. It did not want to impose its authority and act without proper consultation. The educators in the two districts emphatically rejected the offer to get involved. This was another “indication of the persistence of adversarialism in the workplace [which] is the reluctance of unions to take advantage of statutory rights to participation through Workplace Forums” (Kemp, 1998:43).

This impasse was solved in the bargaining chamber and the unions subsequently agreed to instruct their members to take up the extra workloads. This happened after a prolonged period of frustration experienced by the school management (which could be union members in their own right), the department and parents. The Superintendent – General of KwaZulu Natal reiterated the position as follows:

“The termination of the temporary educators is a fait accompli. Schools that have lost staff will have to re-organise their timetables to cater for the losses. The Department is concerned at reports that classes have been left unattended and that in some instances parents have been urged to keep learners at home. Reports have also been received that there is either a refusal to re-organise timetables or that although time-tables have been re-organised, educators, on the instruction of a sector of organised labour, are refusing to teach classes according to the re-organised basis”. (HRM Circular 19/1998, par. 6)

On the resolution of this impasse the Provincial Secretary of SADTU (KZN) Mr. Ndaba Gcwabaza wrote the following to the union membership:

“SADTU KZN therefore calls on all its members to further intensify the campaign for Quality Public Education and Job Security.”

The UNION has been persuaded by COSATU and the Association of Schools’ Governing Bodies to:

- **Set up timetable committees**
- **Commence with the process of re-organising timetables at schools**
- **Ensure that all subjects (examination and non-examination) be included in the timetable**
- **Participate in all COSATU locals**

NAPTU’s approach over the years has been that the child should not be a victim of circumstances. Educators’ complaints should be addressed, it maintained, at the right platform, namely the bargaining chamber or through appointments with the ministry or the Superintendent – General’s office. In my experience APEK and SAOU applied a similar approach.

The remarks of Prof. Themba Sono are of particular relevance in this regard:

“No teacher then would think of downing chalk, abandoning the child alone in the classroom, and proceeding to dance and ululate and shout slogans in the streets. Today, however, we notice a significant number of teachers taking the low road of political protest during school hours, instead of maintaining the high

road of teaching, as was the custom for numerous illustrious African teachers of yore. Sadly, a significant minority of our teachers and university lectures are simple rogues and unmitigated begowned, rascals". (Keynote address 79th Annual Conference of NAPTU, 30 June 1997).

5.5.4 THE MORATORIUM ON TRANSFERS AND THE SECONDMENTS DERTEMINED BY EXCESSS POSTS

The provincial Department of Education imposed a moratorium on the transfer of educators in 1996. Educators had to stay in the schools where conditions had become unbearable for them. Regardless of their personal circumstances or their own preferences, they were compelled to stay where they were before this imposition. Mobility is a human resource privilege that was casually scrapped by the department.

The results of the survey highlight this dilemma. 75% of respondents agreed or agreed strongly with the statement. Those who neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement were rated at 15%. 8% disagreed and 2% disagreed strongly. See also table 5.4.1.

This state of affairs was one of the major frustrations for the educators and it contributed to a severe strain on human relations. I also believe that learners suffer in the process when a disillusioned educator teaches them. The management staff would also like to transfer for various reasons. But these are all dreams at this stage.

The significant figure of 75% shows how serious the situation is. It is an untenable situation that both policy makers and employers cannot ignore if they have the interests of the employees at heart. Most people enter into professions because they think they will be treated with some kind of respect. They never anticipate that at some stage they will be held to ransom by a ruthless employer. It is disturbing and surprising that the department banned voluntary transfers and imposed secondments and redeployment. It is as if the department is saying "the labour market cannot take you, so you remain with us and we will shove you around like chess pieces on a chessboard."

The so-called secondments also depend on the release of an educator by the governing body of the school in which he or she currently serves. It further depends on the

acceptance by the governing body of the new school. Kirchmeyer (1995:516-17) contends that “employers act as if workers’ non-work worlds do not exist. Such employers are concerned mainly with workers’ fulfilling their work responsibilities, and view workers’ non-work lives as solely the concern of workers themselves.”

5.5.5 REFUSAL BY TEACHERS’ UNIONS TO ACCEPT REDEPLOYMENT IN EXCESS POST PARALYZES THE DEPARTMENT’S MANAGEMENT PLAN

Table 5.4.1 shows that 69.5% of respondents agree that the refusal by teachers’ unions to accept redeployment of their members in excess posts paralyzed the department’s management plan. 17% were not sure of how to interpret the situation, since they neither agreed nor disagreed. 9% disagreed while 4.5% disagreed strongly.

The department had planned to redeploy educators in excess posts so that schools can equitably share human resources. This would, in all probability, affect educators in urban and township schools. The educators from these schools would be redeployed to rural schools where there are extreme shortages of skilled and professional educators. There is also a serious imbalance in the ratio of educators in the humanities and those in science and economic and management sciences.

The department wanted to address this very issue. A school cannot be manned by 26 educators specialized in languages and humanities with 4 educators sharing the responsibility of dealing with economic and management sciences and natural sciences. That kind of school is producing people who will find it very difficult to access the labour market. This trend contributes to massive unemployment. All government’s economic strategies like GEAR, equity, affirmative action and capacity building cannot be realized if this is going on in schools.

At the time of conducting the survey, the unions had effectively sabotaged the department’s management plan to redeploy educators. Since then, the impasse has been resolved by negotiations between the Department of Education and teachers’ unions.

There can be no doubt that redeployment did have some very negative consequences in many cases. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the original intention was laudable, and in some cases, schools did benefit from redeployment. Schools that were understaffed in the past or without any qualified educators, now found themselves with several qualified educators on their staff.

At the same time, unions did not demonstrate an ability to distinguish clearly between the advantages and disadvantages of the policy. They rejected the policy completely. One reason for this might be that the resistance culture out of which the unions grew, did not allow for such distinctions and did not teach members to resist what is bad and embrace what is good. Reform does require some form of sacrifice and the ability to make that distinction.

5.5.6 THE STOPPAGE OF ACTING ALLOWANCE HAS LOWERED THE MORALE OF LINE MANAGERS IN SCHOOLS

Educators acting in senior posts previously received acting allowances. This was also the practice with the previous regime. Acting in a more senior position implies not only an increased work load, but also assuming greater responsibilities and being more directly in the firing line by more stakeholders, with all the pressures associated with the position.

Most of the time acting personnel fill in the position for which there should be a full time person. Usually, the performance of acting personnel is good because there is always a possibility of a promotion into that position if the incumbents perform diligently. In many cases they do more than the full time person would have done. Against this background, it is clear that paying or not paying allowances has a direct influence on the morale of the staff involved.

The payment of allowances was discontinued from the start of 1998:

“The payment of acting allowances to educators who are required to act in higher posts will terminate with effect from 1 January 1998. All acting appointments to higher

posts as from 1 January 1998 will be without additional remuneration” (HRM Circular 29/97 par 1.5).

This measure not only damaged the morale of managers, but also seriously endangered the very ideal of COLTS (culture of learning, teaching and service). Candoli (1995:140) suggests that the “district must always remember that the school budget must provide for the numerous support activities that make the operation of the district possible.” The role of the unions can also be questioned in this regard. Because of the pressure to get the highest possible remuneration for their members, they contributed in a certain way to the imbalance in spending. The salary budget increased, while what was left for other important services and infrastructure decreased. “Because the unions’ major task is to get the most possible remuneration for the staff of the district, they are sometimes accused of taking everything and leaving nothing for the other major expenditure area of the school budget” (Candoli, 1995:140).

The survey results show that managers and educators who agreed (strongly and otherwise) with the statement on acting allowance were 163 from the sample of 200 respondents. This represents almost 82%. It is clear that the discontinuation of acting allowances impacted negatively on human relations. Only 13% of both managers and educators neither agreed nor disagreed. Those who either disagreed strongly or disagreed reflected only 4,5%.

5.5.7 THE FACT THAT EDUCATORS DO NOT RECEIVE SALARY INCREASES WHEN THEY ATTAIN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS, HAS DISCOURAGED THE IDEAL OF QUALITY EDUCATION AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

The response to this statement was as follows:

- 91% agreed and agreed strongly;
- 4% neither agreed nor disagreed;
- 4% disagreed;
- 1% strongly disagreed.

SADTU circulated a document entitled “Conditions of Service Adjustment Package for 1 July 1997” to its members for information and further discussion. This document had an attachment marked “Report From the Bargaining Committee Meeting Held on 4-8 June 1997 at Boulevard Hotel in Pretoria.” Although this is not an official document, it illustrates the line of thinking of the union in this regard.

Paragraph 4 of this attachment addressed Higher Qualifications. It read as follows:

“The previous offer of 7% of the minimum salary of salary range 7 was renewed as cash bonus payment. It is proposed that this system be introduced from 1 July 1996 accordingly to which a cash bonus is paid to an educator on post level 1,2,3 or 4 for each such improvement that has the effect that improves the REQV of such educator’s qualification and if such improvement does not have the effect that such educator progresses to a higher salary”.

The policy of the Department to reward higher qualifications with a cash bonus instead of substantive salary progression is in conflict with its own declared goal of quality education. It is not difficult to understand why there is such a negative attitude towards the department and the profession among educators.

5.5.8 THE LINE MANAGER IS OFTEN THE TARGET OF INTIMIDATION BY UNIONS

The school management represents the employer (that is the Department of Education) at school level. Management has to ensure that government policy, especially departmental policy, is implemented by educators and learners alike. Management fulfils the function of a facilitator between the department, parents and learners to work effectively with each other. They are therefore directly in the firing line and often the party who is blamed when anything goes wrong.

The survey supports this interpretation of the situation. 60% of respondents either agreed or agreed strongly. 18.5% neither agreed nor disagreed. 14% disagreed, while 7.5% disagreed strongly. In Chapter 2 (especially section 2.3.4) the role of intimidation in schools was explained. Intimidation sometimes leads to the displacement of educators.

Schlechty asserts that democratic leaders “are not without ideas and commitments of their own that they are prepared to advance, defend and argue for, but when they are in a position of authority, they renounce the right to exercise that authority” (1997:104). Because of my own experience, I fully agree with this assessment. A manager who is seen to be democratic is under constant pressure from his subordinates, especially those that are unionized. Demands are constantly increased.

Kemp (1998:9) says the following in this regard: “The power (and right) to manage the organization is usually contractually vested in management. However, in practice it is found that subordinates often challenge management’s right to manage, thereby attempting to define the relationship as symmetrical (that of equals).” Once the work situation relationship is defined in this way, the manager is most likely to be intimidated if he or she refuses to give in to the demands.

5.5.9 LINE MANAGERS ARE NOT PROTECTED ADEQUATELY BY THE DEPARTMENT AS AN EMPLOYER

This question in the questionnaire has, as its background, the displacement of managers and also Circular 19/1998, which directed the principals and their staff to reorganize their timetables to cater for the terminated temporary educators. The principals were left in the lurch in the process because they were the ones who had to see that the machinery went on despite the disruptive effect of this measure.

The instruction reads as follows:

“Principals are hereby directed to ensure that the process of teaching and learning is not in any way disrupted as a result of the refusal to accept a lawful instruction. If there is a disruption to teaching and learning as a result of such refusal by any member of staff, principals are directed to report such instances immediately to the Department so that disciplinary action can be taken against such employees without delay. Failure to report such action will be viewed in an extremely serious light.”

For school managers the terminations were problematic because at the end they were the ones who had to contend with staff shortages as a result of this policy. Managers are mostly union members themselves. At union meetings they wear the hat of critics of departmental policies. At school they wear another one, that of representing the superintendent – general of the Department. They are caught in the crossfire.

Managers were clearly put into an untenable situation. The statement that **“failure to report such action will be viewed in an extremely serious light”** illustrates the lack of understanding of the situation. This made managers the objects of further attack (verbal and other) by unions and individual educators. It is not strange that senior personnel feel exposed and unprotected by the Department. Change in education can therefore be viewed as a mixed blessing. “Change produces uncertainty and feelings of incompetence: uncertainty because we are forced to deal with the unfamiliar, feelings of incompetence because we do not know how to do what we have never done before” (Schlechty, 1977:119). If principals do not report such refusal they would be seen as incompetent officials deserving demotion, and charges of misconduct. 66.5% of the respondents agreed with this statement.

5.5.10 CONFLICT BETWEEN GOVERNING BODIES AND TEACHER UNIONS UNDERMINE THE PROFESSIONALISM EDUCATORS WOULD LIKE TO ATTAIN

The governing bodies represent parents as one of the stakeholders in the new education system. School committees previously represented parents.

The school committees did not have the extensive powers the new governing bodies have, which includes the right to hire and fire educators. They can recommend educators for promotion and have a right to participate in this process.

“The circumstances of an interview are peculiar in that they are artificial, bringing together a number of people who have never met before and more likely than not will never meet again. As with all committees, some discussion will have taken place beforehand, even to the extent that some minds may have been made up with regard to who should be appointed. Interviews for jobs often come in for such criticism” (Harding, 1987:191).

The survey indicates that 72% agreed with the statement. 18.5% neither agreed nor disagreed while 8% disagreed with the statement. Those who strongly disagreed represented 1.5%. Educators experienced the granting of extensive powers to governing bodies as disrespect for their professional status as they are interviewed and promoted by parents who sometimes are illiterate and have very little understanding of educational matters.

HRM Circular 13/97 contains a policy on the transfer of educators and it makes it clear that all vacant posts have to be advertised. It states the following: “[T]he filling of such vacant post(s) cannot be done without reference to the governing bodies, which are afforded the right of choice by the SA Schools Act, 1996.”

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that management staff often tend to take the side of the governing bodies – possibly for their own protection. Educators see themselves further isolated by their own group. Nonetheless, educators who are school governing body members can at least communicate the perspective of educators to the governing body. These educators bring “a variety of professional opinions [and give] information about the development needs of teaching staff” (Harding, 1987:78).

Some governing bodies do not understand the needs of the professional staff. Educators and these parent governors usually operate at different levels. Under these conditions conflict is likely to prevail. “Reporting back to colleagues (by both parents and teachers) may sometimes be a sensitive issue, especially where discussion at the governors’ meeting has included reference to either individual teachers or to pupils and their families” (Harding, 1978:78).

The system lends itself to abuses. Report backs are often one-sided and lead to conflict. Petty and selfish interests are pursued at the expense of the common goal. Confidentiality, which is very important when dealing with issues affecting individual educators, parents or students, is often breached. The main thing should be to give a report as party to what was agreed upon than as a delegate who just took notes without contributing to the discussion.

5.6 COMMITMENT TO TEACHING

The survey revealed that 87.8% of respondents who are ordinary educators believed that commitment to teaching has changed over the past five years. 93.3% of managers of also had the same response. 7.2% of educators and 6.7% of managers responded with a 'no'. Those who said they 'don't know' among educators were 5% and there were no managers who responded in this manner.

Only 4.3% of educators and no managers thought commitment to teaching has improved. 95.7% of educators and 100% of managers were of the opinion that the commitment had deteriorated. The survey on this reflects a high degree of dissatisfaction concerning commitment when it comes to aspects related to salaries. The reasons for the dissatisfaction were the labeling of qualified educators as temporary, the stopping of acting allowances and non-recognition for higher qualifications.

Swanepoel (1998:512) believes that, generally, the "organizations that give the greatest rewards tend to attract the most applicants and can therefore recruit the best qualified staff." That is why, according to this survey, it was revealed that young and well-qualified staff took advantage of unregulated voluntary severance packages and went into the private sector. Furthermore, "[t]o encourage valuable staff members to remain, the compensation system must provide sufficient rewards for these employees to feel satisfied when they compare their rewards with those received by individuals performing similar jobs in other organisations" (Swanepoel, 1998:512). Private schools offer much more than public schools in terms of salaries.

5.7. UNDERSTANDING AND FUNCTIONING OF THE LRA

5.7.1 FAMILIARITY WITH THE LRA

The response was much more positive than expected. The respondents disproved my pre-conceived idea that they understood little of how the Labour Relations Act functions.

Out of 140 educators, 66 or 47% said they are familiar with the Labour Relations Act. 74 or 53% responded with a 'NO'. Out of 60 managers 45 (75%) said they were familiar with the Act, while 15 (25%) were not.

Kemp (1998:8) defines the employment relationship as "the form of a contractual agreement between the parties concerned (employer and employee)." According to Levy (1992:30), another important component in defining formal employment relationships is "knowledge of labour legislation and the rights and obligations of each party in terms of the law."

A thorough understanding of the LRA is crucial for good human relations.

5.7.2 SELF-ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE LRA

When asked how they would assess their own knowledge and understanding of the LRA, educators and managers responded as follows:

<u>EDUCATORS RESPONSE:</u>	<u>NUMBER OUT OF 140</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
1. I know only the basics	62	44,2%
2. I know only some sections	39	28%
3. I know considerably large sections	12	8,5%
4. I know the whole Act	06	4,3%
5. I know nothing at all	21	15%

TABLE 5.7.1

<u>MANAGERS' RESPONSE</u>	<u>NUMBER OUT OF 60</u>	<u>PERCENTAGE</u>
1. I know only the basics	35	58,3%
2. I know only some sections	14	23,3%
3. I know considerably large sections	08	13, 3%
4. I know the whole Act	01	1,7%
5. I know nothing at all	02	3,4%

TABLE 5.7.2

It would appear from the above that a large percentage of both educators and managers know only the basics and only some sections of the Act. A small percentage knows large sections and the whole Act. Those who know nothing at all make up 15% of educators and 3,4% of school managers. The LRA is an extensively used piece of legislation in this new era of redressing the injustices of the past. The importance of knowing its provisions and understanding its workings cannot be overemphasized.

5.8 TRAINING NEEDS

This section dealt with the need for programmes in human relations. Its inclusion was necessitated by many problems that beset educators. When the respondents were asked whether they had any training in either human relations, reconciliation or team building, they responded as follows:-

- **16,4%** of educators and **40%** of managers had some kind of training
- **17,2%** of educators and **60%** of managers had no training at all
- **66,4%** of educators did not respond to the question at all

Carvell (1970:271) is of the opinion that most people think that human relations should not be taught because a human relation is just common sense. He argues that this assumes that everyone has common sense, which he says it is not true. Top ranking executives, first-line supervisors, and rank-and-file employees are all in need of training. "It follows, then that in an organization the use and teaching of human relations cannot be confined solely to any particular level, but rather it should be universal" (Carvell, 1970:272).

Respondents listed a number of training programmes that deal with some aspect of human relations:

<u>COURSE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF TRAINED EDUCATORS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF TRAINED MANAGERS</u>
a) Team building	01	06
b) Problem solving	02	-
c) Motivation skills	01	-
d) Counseling psychology (by church)	02	-
e) Reconciliation	01	-
f) Human relations	03	01
g) Management course	02	01
h) Leadership	-	02
i) Capacity building	04	02
j) SRC Camps	01	-
k) Semi-formal group training	01	-
l) Induction on promotion	-	08
m) Research	-	01
n) Postgraduate course	-	03
o) Self-taught	-	01
p) Private company sponsored (ISCOR)	-	01

TABLE 5.7.3

When respondents were asked whether they think regular programmes in human relations would improve co-operation among partners in education, the response was overwhelmingly positive. 91.4% of educators agreed that programmes in human relations are very important. Only 8,6% of educators and 5% of managers thought that these programmes would not improve anything.

The following list contains the training programmes that were suggested by educators and managers to be introduced to improve human relations.

- a) **Course on professionalism**
- b) **Training on LRA, National Education Policy Act, SA Schools Act, and Employment of Educators Act**
- c) **Human Relations**
- d) **Management training (annually)**
- e) **Team building**
- f) **Workshops of any kind**
- g) **Parents (governing body) training**
- h) **Communication course for governors, educators and management**
- i) **Culture of tolerance course**
- j) **Competitiveness course**
- k) **Problem-solving skills**
- l) **Staff development**
- m) **Leadership training**

5.8.1 SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION

Respondents were also asked to suggest ways to improve the situation.

The following were listed:

FROM EDUCATORS

- a) **Inflation linked salaries**
- b) **Re-instatement of corporal punishment**
- c) **Put competent people in leading positions**
- d) **First get rid of all corruption**

FROM MANAGEMENT

- a) **Bible as Christian foundation should not be ignored**
- b) **Subject advisers should be more visible at schools**
- c) **The Department must have clear vision, do research first, and then come up with good policies**

- d) **Overthrow the government**
- e) **Management sister programmes with other countries**
- f) **Information should be accessible to school for example Government gazettes**

5.9 FUNDING OF EDUCATION

This section of the survey dealt with ways to generate sufficient funds for education provisioning services. Respondents were told that 90% of provincial and national budget is spent on educators' salaries and that books, classrooms, equipment and other services are provided for by the remaining 10%. The question was asked because educators' salaries are at a very low level and the hypotheses on salaries were still to be assessed by means of the same questionnaire.

Respondents had to choose between four possible responses. The responses were as follows:-

<u>POSSIBLE METHOD</u>	<u>RESPONDENTS OUT OF 140 EDUCATORS</u>	<u>RESPONDENTS: OUT OF 60 MANAGE RS</u>
a) Tax increase	03	03
b) Moratorium on further salary adjustments	17	01
c) Parents should buy books and provide for other services except salaries	80	46
d) Privatization of state enterprise e.g. ESKOM, SAA, PX CARRIERS, etc.	55	36

N.B. (Those who chose both (c) and (d) among educators were at 68% and among management staff were at 41%).

Respondents also added their own suggestions:

EDUCATORS

- a) **Fewer inefficient education bureaucrats (circuits, districts and regions)**
- b) **Efficient budgeting and spending**
- c) **Recognized external auditors to control funds**

MANAGEMENT

- a) Less corruption**
- b) Reduction of tax instead of salary increment**
- c) Reduce provinces from nine to four**
- d) Cut down on useless overseas trips by ministers**
- e) Cut down on useless commissions**
- f) Parents should fund primary and secondary education while government funds tertiary education**

To the question, “How would you like to see the tightening of budget control by the Provinces (all Departments) in order to generate more funds for deficiencies in education?” Options were given. The five responses were as follows:

<u>OPTION</u>	<u>EDUCATO</u> <u>RS (140)</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>MANAGERS</u> <u>(60)</u>	<u>%</u>
(a) A cut on fringe benefits across the board e.g. subsidized cars, hotel accommodation etc.	59	42.1%	42	70%
b) Construction of own structures rather than renting private structures in regions	52	30%	51	85%
c) Gradual phasing out of senior positions across government departments except strategic positions	45	32.1%	16	27%
d) Merger (consolidation) of some government departments and ministries	42	30%	46	77%
e) Abolition of Deputy Ministers' posts	58	41.4%	41	68.3%

It is evident that respondents accept that retrenchments were inevitable.

It is also clear that some employees will lose jobs if the option of a merger (optional) of some departments and ministries could be applied. This can create tension between the government and the labour movement. Hewton (1986:127) asserts that cuts culture is always an unstable culture and he explains that this culture has three competing elements in relation to defensive, pragmatic and reformist issues. He defines them as follows: “The first, defensive, looks to the past, and from this element will come resistance to change and attempts to reinstate cuts made earlier. The second, pragmatic, represents those forces within the organization which () seek

ways to deal with a generally unpleasant but seemingly unavoidable condition.” He defines the third element as “reformist [which] looks to the future and the kind of major shifts in aims, attitudes, structures and procedures which seem necessary in order to adapt to major environmental changes” (127).

Cuts therefore need a pragmatic and reformist approach in order to succeed and to not impact too heavily on individuals. Unfortunately, the educators have become a special target for retrenchments. The only problem is that the government is concentrating very heavily on educators and not on other sectors as well.

CHAPTER 6

PROPOSED POLICY GUIDELINES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The following policy guidelines are based on what the research project found about the causes of strained human relations in the KwaZulu Natal education system. I will not go into detail about all aspects of the hypotheses but I will focus mainly on those statements that need, according to my perceptions, specific attention. It should be noted that the main reason for doing this research project was to devise a mechanism that would bring about some policy guidelines to harmonize and rectify human relations among partners in education in KwaZulu Natal.

6.2 THE LABOUR RELATIONS ACT (LRA)

The Labour Relations Act Number 66 of 1995 determines the rules and guidelines for an employer – employee relationship. This Act applies, as has been stated in previous chapters, across the board, namely, to both the private and the public sector. It also applies to all sectors of employment, which vary from education, health, mining, commerce, transport and the military. The state wanted to have a single legislation that would regulate all employer-employee relationships.

Before 1995 each sector had its own labour relations mechanism because sectors are unique. For example, what happens in the mining industry cannot necessarily be applied to the education sector. The Labour Relations Act is not a sector-specific legislation. It can be said that it ignores, if not undermines, the uniqueness of sectors and professions. Demands on conditions of service, for example, cannot be the same for all sectors. Each sector will have its own needs, which cannot be fully addressed by general legislation that addresses basic needs of employers and employees.

If one carefully studies the work days lost between 1994 and 1998 due to problems across the sectors, it could be inferred that there are serious problems with labour issues in this country. These problems manifested themselves in the advent of the new dispensation and persisted after the enactment of this legislation. Problems are still prevalent in the sectors of employment. The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) is inundated with cases that have to be attended

to on a daily basis. This commission has over the past years complained that it cannot cope with its caseload. Problems such as these emanate from the specifications of the LRA.

The following table explains vividly how this scenario impacts on the personnel at the CCMA as it has to contend with labour issues that are presented to it.

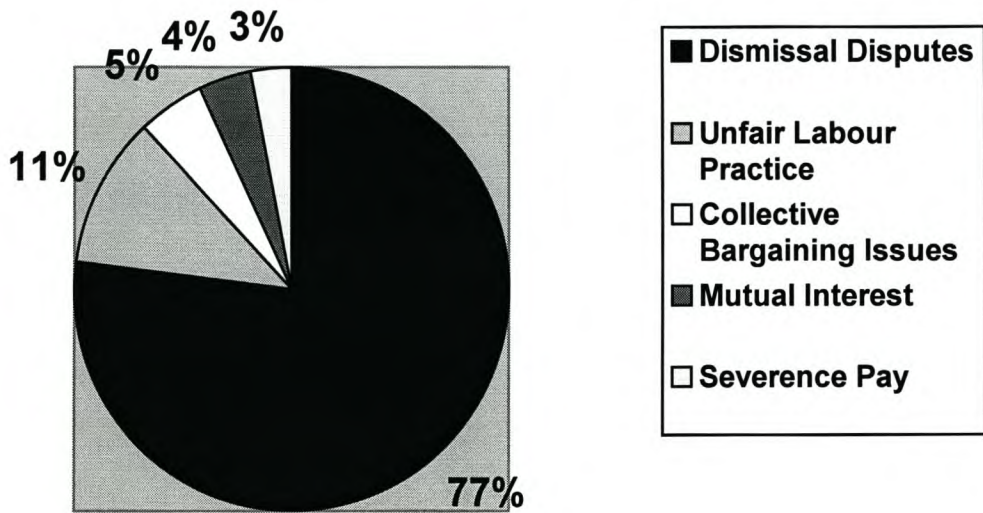


Table 6.1.1

This does not necessarily involve only educational problems but all sectors. However, the crux of the matter is that this country experiences labour problems which ultimately have an impact on human relations. If one looks into the CCMA's Annual Report of 1998, again it is evident that KwaZulu Natal, after Gauteng, has the highest incident of caseload. Table 6.1.2 refers to this state of affairs.

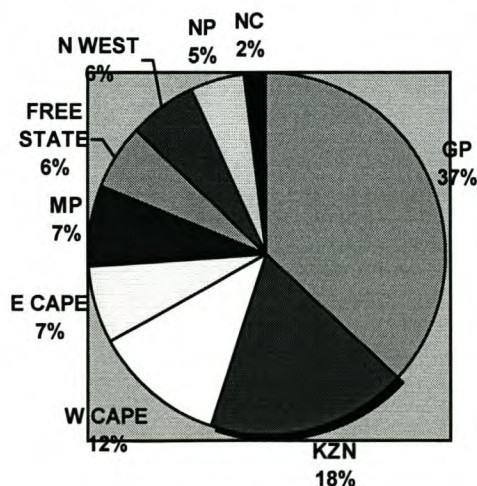


Table 6.1.2**NB: GP – Gauteng Province****KZN – KwaZulu-Natal****MP – Mpumalanga Province****NP – Northern Province****NC – Northern Cape**

It is therefore prudent for the education sector to have its own set of guidelines governing labour relations. This suggestion is not aimed at dismissing the LRA outright in educational matters. The most appropriate thing is to draw some directives from the LRA but it should not be the sole determinant of relations in education. There should be supplementary guidelines in the form of the Act of Parliament. The Department of Education in KwaZulu Natal issues circulars and notices but they are not as effective as an Act of Parliament because they are sometimes mislaid and left unread at all by their recipients.

6.3 KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE LRA

The Department of Education in KwaZulu Natal should look seriously into the issues of training of educators on labour relations. Labour relations have a severe impact on human relations. Human relations are very important in the achievement of the goals and objectives of any given organisation.

Tables 5.7.1 and 5.7.2, on page 102, indicate a worrying situation in education. Knowledge and understanding of the LRA need a lot of attention. 44.2 % of educators and 58.3% of managers indicated that they know only the basics of the LRA. This represents about 52% of the personnel in the two districts of Dannhauser and Newcastle. It is, however, important to state that the department is trying its best to give training to managers. But, the main thing is that ordinary educators should also have some kind of training from the department on labour relations.

Unions can be complimented for this task because they actually see to it that their membership is offered training workshops on labour issues. The problem is that unions have a bargaining mission with the department and they do not take kindly to

losing on issues. They do not necessarily want to bargain, but they want to win over the employer. It is now time, therefore, that the department trained its ordinary educators as well. Some of these educators will discern facts from indoctrination by the unions. It should be understood that it is educators and not managers who cause most problems for the department.

51.3% (28% educators + 23,3% managers) of the sample indicated that they know only some sections of the LRA. This figure is too high. It really indicates that the department should revisit its human resource development programme. 18.4% (15% educators + 3,4% managers) said that they know nothing at all. Problems will prevail for a long time in education if this is not addressed. Every year results will decrease. Children produced by the 'ever-on-strike' calibre of educators will not be ready for the challenges of the labour market, and our economy will not grow.

6.4 RECOGNITION OF FURTHER EDUCATION

The department no longer recognises further education in terms of salary increment. Educators who obtain further education get a 'once off' cash bonus that does not necessarily lead to a salary raise. It could be questioned why the department needs well-qualified educators for promotion when the incentive to learn further is non-existent. This works against the principle of life-long learning that the department itself is trying to inculcate amongst educators. How can results improve if there are no incentives for further study? Further study sharpens the teaching methods and the outlook in general.

The department should solicit funds for allocation towards incentives for further education. The department is one institution that should strive for a competent workforce, since educators lay each profession's foundation. If their morale is low the country is going to experience a decrease in skilled and competent labour.

6.5 SALARY ADJUSTMENTS

The department should work hand in hand with the Departments of Finance and Public Service and Administration to devise a plan that will deal with salary adjustments. This should take place in the form of a "Five Year Plan on Educators

Salaries". This programme will prevent annual bargaining problems in education as these problems impact negatively on human relations and on school results. Strikes will also be prevented.

The five-year plan should be based on economic predictions concerning interest rates, inflation and possible personnel complement within a period of five years. The department will, therefore, deal with petty issues on the labour front rather than on salaries, which seem to drag on for quite a long time. Gradually, the strained human relations between the department and its employees will subside. Policies should make it easier for the department, and the state for that matter, to function smoothly. It should not be policies that are responsible for creating more and more problems.

6.6 EDUCATOR TRANSFERS

Educator transfers had been stopped in 1996 and have never been opened up since then. Educators can only have transfer on promotion and by secondments. Secondment means that an educator works at school B but he/she is on the payroll of school A. He or she could be called back at school A when a need arises. He/she also cannot be seconded to school B if the governing body of this school does not want to accept him/her. Neither could he/she go to school B without being released by the governing body of school A.

The situation is untenable for educators under these circumstances. It is not easy for the department either, to be in good terms with its employees. If this does not help in alleviating problems why does the department have to continue with this policy? It is a self-defeating exercise. The department should open up the transfers for educators, as it is their right to have free mobility as human beings. Many educators and managers have been 'displaced' because of this policy.

Educators have stayed at schools where either learners, parents or managers no longer want them because of personal problems. Life has been very difficult for these educators as some of them had to lose their property through arson and vandalism just for those who do not want them to make a point. For the welfare of its personnel, the department should attend to this working condition.

6.7 **TRAINING PROGRAMMES**

Respondents unanimously agreed and suggested that programmes on human relations are essential. This idea was represented by 91.4% of the overall sample. Proof that minimal attempts have been made for training in human relations is reflected by statistics in table 5.7.3 on page 112 of this research report. Training of staff is a very important aspect of creating successful organisations.

The mere indication of courses (programmes) seen as necessary by educators in the sample, points to serious problems. There is an understanding that training educators could help them find solutions themselves to the problems they experience. They said they need training in the following courses:

- a) **Professionalism**
- b) **Training on LRA, National Education Policy Act (NEPA), SA Schools Act, and Employment of Educators Act**
- c) **Human Relations**
- d) **Annual programme on Management Training**
- e) **Team Building**
- f) **Workshops (of any kind)**
- g) **Governing Body Training**
- h) **Communication Course for Governors, Educators and Management**
- i) **Tolerance Culture**
- j) **Competitiveness Course**
- k) **Problem-solving Skills**
- l) **Staff Development**
- m) **Leadership Training**

It is not ambitious to say that these programmes would really help the educators and the department towards the resolution of problems on a personal level. Everything that people do is determined and shaped by their personality. As these suggestions (on courses) come directly from them, it is fair to assume that if these courses are attended by educators, they can make a meaningful contribution to the improvement of human relations.

It is our belief that this research report, with its suggestions on the improvement of policy guidelines, will help towards the elimination of problems in the KwaZulu Natal education system. It is vitally important to acknowledge problems in the system, to make sure that they are addressed and solved appropriately. Policies should be developed or even changed if circumstances call for that.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In the course of the discussions in the previous chapters, a number of factors have been raised regarding the survey. Certain standpoints of educators and managers have been identified. These standpoints proved some hypotheses and disproved others. Therefore, some conclusions have to be inferred into the education scenario being addressed. These conclusions are discussed in relation to some of the hypotheses.

7.1 HUMAN RELATIONS

As table 4.1.1 in Chapter 4 illustrates, it has been established that the state of human relations in education is very negative. Possible causes of this state of affairs have also been identified. It was stated succinctly by educators at all levels that the abolition of corporal punishment in schools contributed to strained relations. Educators cannot effectively punish learners who have become unruly. The law now protects learners. The educator is obliged to ensure that the culture of learning and teaching takes place. The conditions to do that are not conducive at all.

It is true that corporal punishment alone cannot produce good results in a learner. There are other methods as well, namely the so-called “positive reinforcers”. In the same vein, positive reinforcers cannot alone yield good results. There has to be some form of punishment that includes the threat of some pain so that the learners shy away from unruly behaviour. Detention is one of the punishment methods that is preferred by the Department of Education to corporal punishment. Detention means detaining the learner after school because s/he should not be deprived of learning.

Detention requires supervision by the educator. S/he cannot detain and teach simultaneously. So, s/he has to remain at school after it has closed for the day. This scenario is going to be worsened by the fact that educators have to remain at school for eight hours.

Many educators now resort to retention of the unruly child/learner. This means that the learner has to repeat the grade because the Department’s newly introduced continuous assessment requires that a portfolio of a learner has to be built. This

portfolio is built by considering the learner's participation in class, his/her behaviour, test scores, etc. All these factors will add up to the determination whether the learner has to be promoted to the next grade or has to be retained.

The learner does not derive any good from his/her behaviour because, in the end, the disempowered educator may consider all behavioural aspects of the learner, and this learner will not have the slightest chance to make it to the next grade. Even conditional transfer (previously called condonation) has many aspects to be considered before it is granted. Educators now only have the opportunity to induce emotional pain, not physical pain. Physical pain punishes bad behaviour there and then and it creates no animosity, but emotional pain endures for quite a long time. How then will human relations in education be fostered under these circumstances?

“Retention accomplishes absolutely nothing but to ice the cake of failure. The accumulated scientific evidence on this issue is indisputable. Many follow up studies have shown that children who were retained continued to fail the following year, and their academic problems were then compounded by emotional difficulties. The retained child is held back with “little kids” while his contemporaries move on to a new grade level and a new teacher. He feels overgrown, foolish, and dumb” (Dobson, 1992:171).

Another possible cause of strained relations identified was a lack of equipment and facilities. The main objective of the Department of Education nationally and provincially is to improve end of year results especially at the exit point, namely senior certificate level. This objective can only be achieved through the supply and provision of equipment and facilities. Teaching and learning cannot effectively function under a leaking roof and behind shattered windows. An educator is demoralised under these working conditions.

When the department is approached to help with the situation, the school managers and governing bodies are told that the budget is tight. This proves that even in the near future these situations will not be properly addressed because the salary bill for educators is huge. Even if early retirement and retrenchment were options, this will also mean huge sums of money to be expended. It is a bitter experience for an MEC

of Education to lose his/her job because results are poor when the infrastructure for ensuring better results does not exist.

It seems that the new government (ANC) wanted to achieve too many things within a period of five years. We saw grand policies to address the imbalances of the past but the famous saying: "Rome was not built in a day" is a fact of life. A successful government is one that aims at achieving a few dire objectives rather than multiple ones. Every policy appears to depend upon the economic conditions of the time for it to be realised. Sometimes the politicians tend to be emotionally driven by the rhetoric rather than actual facts. They seem to want to please their constituencies with empty promises to secure a seat in the legislature.

"Top management must be aware of actual or potential incompatibility between multiple objectives. This may arise from divergence between official goals of the organization as a whole and the unofficial goals of groups within it" (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984:162). It stands to reason, therefore, that as parliamentarians press for other objectives, they can sway the aims of the government from those envisaged by the incumbent minister or MEC.

It may also be that the MEC does not press for an adequate budget to cater for the department's objectives. Budget allocation requires a decisive argument with legislature and the minister of finance. Non-commitment to consultation and lack of communication is one of the causes of strained human relations in education, though it was not highly rated as such by the respondents. But, if this aspect could be taken in conjunction with other possible causes, such as the way the Labour Relations Act is understood and lack of praise by the supervisor, it can be concluded that it is a source of potential conflict.

Managers and educators do not communicate effectively with one another. Each group tends to do things as it sees fit without assessing the impact of such behaviour on the rest of the group. "Many managers still think of listening as a commonplace skill, but we have found that it is not valued –or practiced –nearly as often as it needs to be today.

Our experience is that people tend to focus more on formulating a rebuttal to what someone else is saying than on listening to what the other person is saying” (Hersey et al,1996:414).

This trend of not wanting to listen to one another is a recipe for disaster. The managers lead, but in leading they need to listen to their subordinates so that the direction into which they pull together is a common to all involved. The educators as subordinates have to create an atmosphere of leadership to function effectively. They must understand that consultation is meant for consensus building and not passive resistance to an employment relationship. Praise indicates to the educator that his or her efforts are observed and that they contribute to the viability of an organisation. An environment full of blame and criticism is not conducive to productivity. It demoralises the urge to succeed. Praise inculcates positive behaviour in an employee.

“Praising is the most powerful activity a manager can do. In fact, it is the key to training people and making winners of everyone working for you” (Hersey et al.1996:406). Through praise a manager says “thank you” to the subordinate for realising that we are all in this together. The success of an organisation depends on good human interaction. Both the manager and the subordinates reap the rewards through promotion or merit bonuses.

However, praise alone does not yield effective results. It has to be balanced with fair reprimand when something goes wrong. Praise not coupled with reprimand for default will become meaningless. Praise and reprimand are processes that depend entirely on timing. The supervisor must praise the incident as and when it happens or immediately after it has happened, as is the case with reprimand. Hersey et al., 1996:409 directs that as a supervisor one must “reprimand as soon as possible after an incident.

One must not save up [one’s] feelings. If you “gunnysack” and store up your feelings, when you finally let go of them, they are apt to be out of proportion to the event that triggered your emotional release.”

7.2 UNREGULATED VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE PACKAGES

The Provincial Department of Education embarked on severance packages in order to reduce its teaching personnel. Many educators opted for it especially young and well-qualified educators. Science and economic and management sciences personnel took these packages to go to the private sector because they would enjoy better salaries. These educators knew that their skills and expertise are marketable in both the public and private sector.

Since these severance packages were not properly supervised, they did not help to reduce personnel in the long run but created another problem. They resulted in a skewed personnel structure whereby humanities and language educators were the dominant personnel. These educators did not go anywhere because labour market conditions could not accommodate them. The department had to look for science and economic and management recruits for the second time around. At the same time older personnel could not be easily released by the department because it is expensive to give severance packages to experienced employees.

These conditions created an atmosphere where “the special interest of decision makers can cause recommendations for action to show a preference for ‘solutions’ that meet the needs of these interest groups as opposed to satisfying the conditions required to produce the intended results” (Schlechty, 1997:111).

The results of the survey indicated that retrenchments should be focussed mostly on people from the age of 55 and older. 64% of respondents preferred this option to others. It is obvious that respondents realize that people of this age, especially among Africans, received an inferior education based on grand apartheid policies of job reservation and Bantu Education. This education system channeled the Africans to embark on subjects and courses that moved parallel to economic and scientific expertise.

The respondents showed through the questionnaire that they have also realized that labour market conditions dictate that employees have to operate according to business principles. They chose, also, an option of failure to observe an employment contract such as absenteeism and incapacity as determinants of retrenchment. This proved that

the department's policy of retrenchment was not supervised as well as not informed by the labour market conditions.

7.3 THE LABELING OF QUALIFIED EDUCATORS AS 'TEMPORARY EDUCATORS'

The results of the survey have shown that 95% of respondents agreed that this label lowered the morale among educators. Herman in Hewton (1986:73) suggests that "without time pressure a problem will be left to the future and systematically misperceived". The government should have taken steps a long time ago to restructure the education system. The province has a number of colleges of education producing humanities and language educators. There are very few science and commercial colleges. Lecturers and their newly qualified educators are facing a bleak future because colleges are closing down and new educators cannot find permanent employment.

The executive director of the National African Professional Teachers Union (NAPTU) made the following statement at the NAPTU protest rally on 30 March 1998 in Durban. He said "[t]he dismissal of temporary educators is a case of a bad idea that is being handled wrongly. It is simply not prudent to lay off young, strong and newly qualified educators for whatever reason including financial constraints and rationalisation of education. The best thing to have happened was to have lowered the retirement age of all public servants, so that dismissals occur from the top end of the working force."

7.4 THE LINE MANAGER IS OFTEN THE TARGET OF INTIMIDATION BY UNIONS

The line manager is an employee like other educators, but the tendency is to see him or her as an employer. It is true that s/he represents the employer in a school but this should be understood to mean that s/he conveys to the employer the aspirations and concerns of the educators. The line manager also has to see to it that educators make their organisation a productive place so that they cannot lose work as a consequence of redundancy. A gainfully employed educator ensures the existence and endurance

of the organisation and in the process s/he supports his/her family through earnings s/he gets from such an organisation.

Educators even forget that line managers are also members of unions themselves. Sometimes line managers enforce rules that are an infringement of their rights too. A manager is an official who operates on a higher pedestal than an educator. S/he mostly does things rationally rather than being carried away by the mob rhetoric. S/he is in a position of responsibility because s/he is a responsible person in the first place.

However, it is alarming to note that educators, as elite personnel, cannot decipher those aspects in the duty sheet of a line manager. They intimidate him/her with all sorts of threats. They withhold their working power, they show innate resistance to authority, and they sometimes harass their line managers under the guise of a union. Both the managers and educators become defensive in the process.

“Defensiveness is a natural corollary of uncertainty. It implies a cautious attitude towards new ventures, a lowered positive responsiveness to overtures from others and less willingness to co-operate. Attitudes become introverted and the main concern becomes protection of one’s own interests – individual or departmental” (Hewton, 1986:77). These conditions are a breeding ground for strained human relations and resultant conflict.

7.5 THE CONFLICT BETWEEN GOVERNING BODIES AND TEACHERS’ UNIONS.

Governing bodies are a persistent threat to educators who do not have an appropriate work ethic. These empowered parents want to ensure that their children are consistently taught. Educators, in the new dispensation, are employed by the governing bodies but paid by the Department of Education. Governing bodies have power to promote and fire an educator in their schools.

What is needed between these two groups is a common objective to instill the culture of learning and teaching. The other issues need not threaten each group because both exist in order to see to it that learners receive proper education. The notion of

democratisation is something we cannot reverse. These parents (governing bodies) are the people who assist the department, given its failure, in providing free education that it promised its citizens. They foot the bill and in the process educators have jobs.

But problems are likely to be a common feature if each group functions in isolation from the other. Educators and governing bodies are stakeholders in education. “When each school site is governed by an autonomous group that may be under no real obligation to take into account the decision made by the other groups, the long –term interest of children is likely to give way to the momentary passions of particular groups of activist parents at a particular time” (Schlechty,1997:116).

7.6 SHORTCOMINGS IN THE RESEARCH AND POSSIBLE FUTURE AREAS OF STUDY

7.6.1 SHORTCOMINGS IN THE RESEARCH

The research questionnaire entailed sections dealing with the following aspects.

- a) Human relations;**
- b) Commitment to teaching;**
- c) Understanding and functioning of the Labour Relations Act;**
- d) Training needs and**
- e) Funding of education.**

There was a large amount of ground to be covered by a single thesis. There was so much information that I had to choose hypotheses and questions that were highly ranked by the respondents. A lot of important information became unusable because the length of the thesis had to be kept in mind. I must note, here, that my supervisor commented on this via constant exchange of letters, as well as verbally. I insisted that all questions were important and he respected my opinion.

7.6.2 POSSIBLE FUTURE AREAS OF STUDY

7.6.2.1 TRAINING NEEDS

Training should be part and parcel of the employee fraternity. For the government system that is bent on completely undoing the workings of the previous apartheid government, it is its responsibility to assess and determine training needs. The employee fraternity cannot be left with the hope that they will be able to take responsibility for all of their own needs. The likelihood is that the present ANC government and the IFP government in particular, will not be able to deliver on the promises of 1994 elections in KwaZulu Natal. This will cost the IFP government dearly, whereas policies are formulated at a national level, the fact is that they are executed by provincial departments.

There is still a lot of training work to be done on employees (educators) to understand the functioning of the Labour Relations Act. Sensitivity to the market conditions has to be engendered. It should be understood that economic stability depends upon the committed workforce. Employees should not play around with productivity that is lost in man-days through the workforce that engages in strikes for months in succession. The government should cater for training needs and researchers also have a role to play in coming up with solutions in relation to training needs.

7.6.2.2 FUNDING OF EDUCATION

The funding of education should be explored as a study of further research in its own right. Respondents came up with many other options than those supplied in the questionnaire. So, the research report could not cover all details fully, except to highlight them. The funding of education should have been a thesis on its own, though I should mention that some information on it was covered.

The research question read as follows:

“How can policy guidelines be devised to improve the relations in education which are so strained among stakeholders in the reater Newcastle Area”.

This question was thoroughly dealt with in Chapter 5 where some policy guidelines were suggested to improve the situation. It is my belief, therefore, that some contribution has been made in the field of human and labour relations in education.

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